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# EDITORIAL NOTES

IT was in the year immediately following the war, at a moment supposed to be full of promise for literary enterprise, that Sir John (then Mr.) Squire founded THE LONDON MERCURY. At last, it was supposed, authors would have the leisure to write and the public be disposed to listen to words that were written to give pleasure and to interpret the life of the time imaginatively. As a monthly magazine devoted to original literature and criticism of the arts THE LONDON MERCURY was designed to fill a place that had from the nature of the case been left vacant during the war. I might add that during the whole of English literary history that place had seldom been adequately filled, and never for long. Early in the last century the *London Magazine*, to which Leigh Hunt, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey and Keats were contributors, lasted only nine years. Early in the present century *The English Review*, as edited with so much fineness and gallantry by Mr. Ford Madox Ford (then known as Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer) lasted for little more than a year, though it was carried on with distinction and success by Austen Harrison till the beginning of the war; it was not Harrison's fault that in the remaining years of his editorship it languished.

SO that place was conspicuously vacant in 1919, and Sir John Squire, with a band of poets, story-writers and critics in attendance, moved in—to stay. Fifteen years is something more than a sojourn, being half a generation as the genealogists reckon, and two generations (according to the newest estimates) in literature. It goes without saying that in the endeavour to establish itself as a literary magazine, the MERCURY has had its tribulations. But it has survived them. Here it is, with what signs of life I must leave it to readers to judge. And now that Sir John Squire has decided to withdraw from the editorial fray and devote himself more exclusively to writing work, he takes with him—though perhaps it is absurd to go through the form of telling him what he knows so well—the affectionate good wishes of innumerable friends and admirers.

IF anyone asks what I mean by two generations in fifteen years I would refer him to a young writer (a contributor to the present number of THE LONDON MERCURY), who was talking to me recently about a past literary period which he was old enough to remember—it extended from 1919 to about 1926. He was alluding to it as an older man might to the Edwardian, or a still older man to the Victorian age—as a time interesting to remember, but irrevocably gone, in its characteristics utterly and obviously removed from all that is stirring to-day; an out-worn phase of the Time-spirit, a link—no more—in the historic chain. It might be looked back upon rebelliously or with detachment (according to temperament). It might be studied with reverence or amusement. The point was that its movement and life are not the movement and life of the young geniuses who are now on the verge of conquering the world, and who will hold the fort, I suppose, till it is their turn to be displaced six or seven years hence. 1934 nods aloofly to 1924, and looks back with adolescent indulgence on that post-war, middle-neo-Georgian period, which ended, shall we say, in the year of the General Strike, or perhaps just lasted to that transition moment when the war-writers emerged suddenly from their reveries in No-Man's-Land, were devoured by the reading public, and were then disgorged and done with. A new period has been in existence for several years, and some of us are only just beginning to notice it. Straining our eyes towards the dawning generation with the reverence which the present accords rather to the future than the past, we confess our sins, like the pilgrim catching sight of the sacred peak of Kailasa, and perform to it the obeisance of one hundred and eight bows.

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BUT I do not think it is peculiarly necessary, at this time of day, to stress the importance of being alert in looking for the new idea that is striving for utterance, and is destined to shape the intellectual or imaginative progress of the future. That is a matter of course. Obviously we must be heedful of originative movements if we are to remain alive; obviously we must be on the look out for the "new thing." But what matters is to be able to distinguish the genuine "new thing" from mere novelty. "Pursuit of novelty in thought," said a sage of the third century A.D., "has become an orgy in which the present generation revels." The pursuit is amusing, but it is, in fact, a very old-fashioned game; and it has always the disadvantage that it may put us off the true scent; we may double on our tracks and lose ground, and find ourselves pouncing on a quarry that was démodé forty years ago. But if we are steering our course wisely in the search, say, for new literature, and discover qualities which show "promises and specific symptoms of poetic power"—such as Coleridge detected in the early works of Shakespeare, in *Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*—then indeed we shall be achieving something. But even so we shall be in error if we prefer *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* to *Hamlet* and *Lear*, and extol Shakespeare the boy above Shakespeare the man.

Promise is exhilarating, but only because it foreshadows accomplishment. It is accomplishment, and nothing but accomplishment, which in the long run justifies anything in literature. It is only by what is actually achieved that the reader will be pleased, the critic satisfied or the publicist excused. And the conclusion that we must abide by this decisive result cuts both ways, for it rules out at one and the same time the young charlatan who is too clever by half and the old charlatan who trades on a reputation which he never deserved, or, having deserved it, still pretends to possess what he has lost.

THE LONDON MERCURY, I hope, will be fortunate enough to retain the services of the wise and experienced elders and to enlist those of men who are trying to blaze new trails. I cannot believe that the two groups, if grouped they must be, are, by virtue of that accident of age alone, in any real sense opposed, assuming that their respective members are neither decayed nor fraudulent. What matters most, it seems to me, is that the people who are interested in ideas about life and in the pleasing shapes which the vital idea loves to assume, and in the preservation or adaptation in this utilitarian world of what is congenial to the spirit, and comely, or robustly self-dependent, should stand together so far as they reasonably can, and without excessive intellectual or temperamental strain. There are not too many of them of any generation or age. They may have been born to rebel against Victorian parents, or to vibrate in youth with the moral fervour of liberating Edwardian prophets, or to smile with the epicureans of the middle-Georgian period, or to frown to-day with the severity of twenty-one upon the flippancy of twenty-seven. What matters mainly is the possession of what Hazlitt called *gusto*—and that presupposes enough intellectual industry to provide taste with fit material to feed it. There is gusto, to be sure, in the writings of that magnificent veteran, Mr. H. W. Nevinson, whose *In the Dark Backward* is among the very best books of this year and one of the best books written by Mr. Nevinson. And THE LONDON MERCURY will account itself fortunate if it can extract something more from the ever-exquisite Mr. Max Beerbohm. And there is gusto, belonging, I believe, to the same essential order of things—however different in individual type—in the poems of young Mr. Spender and the essays and poems of Mr. Michael Roberts.

IF a LONDON MERCURY was needed in 1919, when men and women were wanting to think about something different from war and politics, so a journal or many journals, similarly disinterested, are needed to-day, when the world is in danger of thinking about nothing but economics. I am not decrying economics, or the importance of the place that economics is beginning to take in University education. But I cannot think it desirable that most of the intellectual energy of the nation should be given up—as to-day it does tend to be given up—to consideration of

the bare bones of the "economic crisis," or the problems of nationalism and prospective war. I admit that no intelligent human being to-day can or probably ought—I dislike imperatives—to turn his back on these matters. They and their like are insistent and pervasive, and inevitably so. And that being the case, those who are interested in literature, art, architecture, music and choice ideas of any kind, and believe that the past is worth remembering and the future worth moulding in forms congenial to selective minds, must themselves, if they would survive, go out into the practical world and make their wills effective. Thus, while THE LONDON MERCURY will continue to be interested in the accepted problems of literature and the arts, it cannot be content with that. It must also turn to some of the practical matters which either are the objects of taste, or mould it—which stimulate in our minds the impressions which are our conscious life and stuff for the artist to handle. We cannot afford to be indifferent to

> unquiet things
> Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs

whether they proceed from sophists, bards, or statesmen. Nor can we be indifferent to the manner in which the next generation is being instructed at school, or to the rightness and wrongness, as we conceive it, of the reconstruction of the towns and country which we inhabit. It will be our job to provide entertainment, and possibly even a little instruction, for men and women of taste, and also to remember that taste is affected not only by books and *objets d'art*, but by much else in life. And since there never was a time when those things which are valued by persons of taste were in so much jeopardy as to-day, it seems that THE LONDON MERCURY should, as the occasion demands, widen its scope to admit of the discussion of such matters.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

NET MENDERS *wood engraving by* CLARE LEIGHTON

# DEPARTED

## OR, 'TIS TWENTY YEARS SINCE

By EDMUND BLUNDEN

MOATED and granged, recall the Gentry who
Could as they would, but never wrongly, do ;
These at their weddings paid for anthem sung,
For voluntary played, and rice unflung.
Their funeral also had its golden tint,
Our choristers confused it with the Mint :
On the sad day, Regret would reign at three,
And later came Rejoicing with the fee.
To Gentry and no others was assigned
This special power : they in the evening dined.
Their cricket caps, of floral stripe and dye,
Proclaimed accomplishment, and did not lie.
For them a pitch smooth as the bowling-screen
Was guarded from the rougher, dustier green.
In church their knees impressed soft hassocks ; they
At mattins came, at vespers were away,
Except that spinster whose kind angels flew
About her while she moved from pew to pew
Lighting the candles. Parrots, mourn your friend ;
Canaries, let your trills to her ascend !

* * * *

Who now succeed ? What demigods have we ?
Who scraped the gilding from the family tree ?
Ask of the roadhouse, try the bungalow.
Welcome, Squire Thenks-Chum and Lord Arfamo.

# POEM IN DEDICATION

By MICHAEL ROBERTS

AND new simplicity is mine—
Mine as a sunrise, summer Alpine morning, came
Through feathery rising puffball,
urging, bringing
Amber and flame to the mountain,
surging, flinging
High on the silent wind, resilient mist,
ranging, revealing,

Superb white pyramid and rock-arête, blue shadow
Dark striated bergschrund, and below
The slow unyielding traverse and the exposed descent,
the ledge
Where I (or was it I ?) remember,
Under green Vega shivering,
grasping, testing
Flake and uncertain crevice,
wavering, trusting
Skill in the quivering muscle,
slipping, straining,
Gaining new hand- and foothold,
resting, rising.—

Probing the dark, the easier danger,
jumping,
clattering
Down the last gully and the final scree,
Down to resounding water, dank
Moss, and the firm at last God-given ground.—
How sleeping
Sound under crag and boulder.
Sleeping, then
To a sudden change of rhythm, waking,
rinsing
Eyes in the glacier torrent, munching
Bread, and remembering failure, laughing ; living,
planning the new direct ascent—
resolving, scanning, watching
Chance upon chance assemble, hope
Grow to a step substantial, trace
The untrodden route, not easy, quick to reward a slip,
but O,
The last thin cloud dissolving,
certain now
As the wide earth, and sound of water, and the sun's
Touch, and the light, the London air,
Bright in untrammelled daybreak, bring your name.

# THE GENERAL

By A. A. SIMPSON

THE third Marquis of Londonderry
with his big busby
in the market square
prances politely
an old Lord Lieutenant
unregarding the Cathedral

a polished marauder,
who when he lived
brushed his tall feather
on the Office ceiling
scratching the courtly
eighteenth-century plaster,

O 'twas a fine one.
He was a General
in the Good Queen's nonage
gilt pelisse and sabre ;
soldiers saluted him
their linked spurs grounded,

he knew not his children,
he chopped his breakfast
with smack and gusto,
he hugged his cold wife
with military fervour
and stiff perfunction.

He is only a thought now
for he's no more than bronze now
pale-greened with the weathers
that run from his housings
tall plume on the busby
and other accoutrements,

while that stern Norman
built with much prayer, much goodness
and some unwisdom
still takes the end-light
at sun-gift and evening
grey for his green
still there and unbusbied
—save for some small stoles
and each pompous surplice.

# ÆTAT THIRTY

By CHARLES NORMAN

## PART ONE

SELF-PORTRAIT : young man,
In a room two by four ;
Moustached, cosmopolitan,
Feet firmly on the floor :

Heart, mind and senses five,
Spirit and flesh and bone,
Against which strive
The world's ills and his own.

By many devious paths men come
Unto themselves at last :
This is the sum
And quotient of the past.

Doorways in streets of nightfall, the
Curb prowler, snatcher of cigarettes—
Proud cities fringed with poverty,
The traveller, beguiled, forgets.

Brimful of music I have gone,
Musing that accident
Is geometric ; stood upon
Crossroads of bewilderment,
When fog and lamplight blent.

By train, by ship at sea,
Fleeing myself I fled ;
The cities harboured me,
And still desire led.

## PART TWO

When sunset burned the downs,
And set the meadowlands on fire,
I stood in the lonely, unknown towns,
My mind a second pyre

To burn the bright stuff of desire.
Out of the west the west wind blew,
And sang in the telegraph wire,
Or walked light-footed in the dew.

And now New York : night takes the street,
The trees of Cottage Row ;
The lanterns suddenly repeat
How suddenly the day can go,

The mind aglow, and the world aglow.
Sweet faces light the dusk
Like lamps ; the first stars show ;
Strange air is strewn with musk.

Westward the hours wane ;
Beyond, the farms begin ;
Sunbright or glistening in rain,
The corn thrusts high and thin ;
And fills the barn and bin.

Bells plunge in the tower,
The grey air takes flight ;
It is the lonely hour,
The hour of the coming of night,
The withdrawal of light.

## PART THREE

Room two by four
Over the roaring " El "—
Tread of old tenants speaks from the floor,
The walls are under a spell.

The walls draw back, become
Room under the eaves
(In Paris) that thunders like a drum
When bells plunge and the air heaves,
And sound drops from the towers like leaves.

Through the dark hall the landlord goes ;
Past street, meadow and hill,
The days have blown as the wind blows ;
The landlord's shadow floods the sill.

I have waited a long time
For something ; gone alone
Through streets, made rhyme
In the woods of stone :

Through streets of rain,
In fading hours ; seen
Sudden traffic flowers stain
Moist air red and green.

In many cities it has been
The same : like remembered words :
In autumn, when heels ring keen,
And the wind lifts leaves like birds.

## PART FOUR

Time with his alchemy
Deals with the hawk as with the dove ;
Gives the shore to the sea,
Turns love to non-love.

The ultimate withdraws,
Grows dim : time brings the adjective,
Surprises with the dangling clause,
To modify imperative.

Goal prodded farther by desire,
Objectives dimmer grown,
Men are to what they aspire,
To themselves alone.

Lavish of gold, pollen and spray
Of light, hither once more spring blows :
Apple-blossom by day,
By night the rose.

The open window lets spring in ;
Light throngs the empty room
With singing radiance, gold-thin,
And gold motes in the gloom.

It is the same, and not the same :
Spring, as before, returns in sighs,
And with compelling flame,
Lights our uncertainties.

## PART FIVE

Something is over—it had been brief;
It dwelt in the room under the eaves;
Its voice was grief
When the sky rained leaves.

It dwelt in all things fair:
In books whose words strode forth,
Clad in speech. The walls received their
Splendour and their mirth.

The books dissolve in air,
The booksellers get them all;
The shelves turn bare.
I have seen them lying on a stall,

(But most I never saw again)
Pinched and poked like shy maids
By unobtrusive men
Attraction half-persuades.

I have seen them vanish one by one,
For tobacco money or a whim:
Whole shelves have been undone,
The library grows dim.

The items are dispersed,
Their splendour fled.
The fragrance nursed
Stays in the head.

## PART SIX

Wind be my sighs, and rain, my tears;
Air, mourn that solitude,
The scattered years,
Quotidian feud.

To keep the flower of my mind
Alive, how have I laboured, long;
Endured the sorrows of my kind,
For a stave of song:

Gone down streets with the throng,
Turned corners in the crowd's press,
To go past lighted windows hung
With the lamps of loneliness.

Item : by the river stair,
When chestnut blossoms stream :
Love halts the lovers there,
Between the street lamps' gleam.

Item : Joyce taking the air,
Stooped figure cloaked in renown,
Photographed in my stare :
Pace slow, musing, head down.

And in the Luxembourg aglow
With glitters of the early day :
Pound. I watched him go,
Till he was far away.

## PART SEVEN

The year goes out in cold,
And gloom usurps the street
That glowed before the year was old ;
The pavement rings with passing feet.

In the dead end of year,
The heart and mind go full ;
All that the mind held dear,
And beautiful, is sorrowful.

No fragrance found in verse,
And sweet in memory,
Paces its pentameters
In such clear harmony,
As the sad thoughts of maturity.

When the prompt lamps transform the town,
And the wind choirs in the street,
And window-shades are down,
And flitting shadows meet :

The " El " across the building's brow
Drowns music like drowned bells
That once, more valiant than a vow,
Rang out above the sea swells :

At the fugitive hour of day,
When smoke from marshalled chimneys curled,
And street noises died away :
And fleeting light dusked the world.

THE END

ST. EDMUND HALL, OXFORD,

*Drawing by* R. MYERSCOUGH-WALKER

The new wing on the right completes the quadrangle. The seven-hundredth anniversary of the foundation is being celebrated this autumn.

# ROGER FRY

By E. M. FORSTER

ROGER FRY'S death is a definite loss to civilization. He was a great critic and a fine lecturer, and according to some a good painter; he was in touch with the best continental opinion, particularly French opinion ; he was charming, polite, courageous and gay in his private life ; he was generous and energetic ; he was always helping people, especially the young and the obscure. On all these counts he will be missed, but the definite loss lies elsewhere. What characterized him and made him so precious in twentieth-century England was that, although he was a modern, he believed in reason.

Belief in reason was common enough among the educated a couple of hundred years back, but it is rare to-day, because our knowledge has become greater and our problems more complicated. We can no longer divide mankind into philosophers, priests and dupes, as Gibbon or Voltaire could. Even when we style ourselves philosophers, we know that we are sometimes duped, and not always by the priests. We know that each of us carries about a mass of inherited instincts which enters into our judgments and complicates our actions. How is it possible for so mixed a being as man to be reasonable ? One might as well expect brass to behave as if it were unalloyed copper. Is not belief in reason based upon a misconception of human nature which we should correct ? Since the war, an increasing number of people have come to feel this, and are taking refuge instead in authority or in intuition. Authority attracts our dictators and our serfs, because it seems to promise a stable society. Intuition attracts those who wish to be spiritual without any bother, because it promises a heaven where the intuitions of others can be ignored.

Now Roger Fry rejected authority, mistrusted intuition. That is why his loss is so irreparable. There is no one now living—no one, that is to say, of his calibre—who stands exactly where he stood. He rejected authority absolutely. It is fairly easy for a recluse to reject it or at all events to elude it, but he was not a recluse, he was always in the world and keenly interested in its details, and it is difficult for such a man to avoid being overawed by the imposing figures who surround him and try to set the pace. He is tempted to listen not to what they say but to their names. But a name meant nothing whatever to Fry. He had, in this respect, the unworldliness of his Quaker forebears, and he could always shake an opinion out of its husk, and hold it up to the light of reason, where it often shrivelled to nothing at all. If you said to him, " This must be right, all the experts say so, all the Trustees of the National Gallery say so, all the art-dealers say so, Hitler says so, Marx says so, Christ says so, *The Times* says so," he would reply in effect, " Well. I wonder. Let's see." He would see and he would

make you see. You would come away realizing that an opinion may be influentially backed and yet be tripe. Needless to add, his rise in the official world was slow. It was not until recently that he was elected to a Slade professorship—an extraordinary delay in view of his outstanding claims. And after his death the obituary announcer of the B.B.C. spoke not of him but of a ninety-two-year-old admiral who once captured a Chinese fort. Roger would have found the admiral entertaining and appropriate, almost a sedative. "Yes, well . . ." comes his veiled, beautiful voice, "well, yes, of course, he would capture it." And his eye travels back to the canvas or his hand to the chessboard. He was not an aggressive man, but he was not conciliatory. His integrity and his independence were more to him than official seemliness, and if he wanted to make a devastating remark about Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, O.M., he made it, and scandalized authority.

Intuition he did not reject. He knew that it is part of our equipment, and that the sensitiveness which he valued in himself and in others is connected with it. But he also knew that it can make dancing dervishes of us all, and that the man who believes a thing is true because he feels it in his bones, is not really very far removed from the man who believes it on the authority of a policeman's truncheon. So he was suspicious of intuition, subjecting it, as it were, to a fumigating process, and not allowing it into his life until it was well aired. Here, it can be argued, he showed himself more of a critic than of a creative artist. Certainly he never tired in applying logic to the illogical—an endless task, though in his case no labour of Ixion. New vistas kept opening as he rose. In his latter years he became more and more fascinated by the implications of modern psychology, and he would not if he could have exchanged his complicated inheritance for the simpler domain of the eighteenth century, where reason reigned unchallenged, or was challenged only by ignorance.

As a young man, he took a science degree at Cambridge; then he devoted himself to art. It was he who introduced the post-impressionists to England and it was his ideas for furniture and decoration which were taken up by commercial firms after the Omega workshops failed. But his æsthetic achievement will be recorded by others; I have no qualifications for referring to it, and though I knew him for many years I only entered into a corner of his rich and varied life. It just seemed worth while, in this brief notice, to emphasize the belief which underlies his æsthetics and all his activity: the belief that man is, or rather can be, rational, and that the mind can and should guide the passions towards civilization. He is a terrible loss. Yet somehow he cannot be mourned. There is something anti-funereal about him, just as there was something anti-pi. Enthusiastic, yet comprehending, he moves down the sinister corridor of our age, and those of us who knew him or listened to him or listen to him are heartened to go ahead without him.

# MODERN LIFE AND CLASSICAL EDUCATION

By HERBERT SIDEBOTHAM

THE most determined enemies of classical education have never denied that it might be a luxury. But when they concede so much, do they realize how much they have conceded? A man who knows enough Greek to be able to read Plato with his feet in the fender enjoys a degree of pleasure denied to the reader of any modern author, because his accomplishment, being so much rarer and fetched from a higher antiquity, sharpens the pleasure of the student with the joy of the collector and connoisseur. Indeed, the more the detractors of classical studies succeed in denying them every other quality but that of luxuriousness, the purer they must admit to be the intellectual enjoyment that they confer. All education is a fruitful marriage of the student's mind with another's or with some body of external facts. If the issue of the union be a better chance of making money, or of exercising power on the external world, the marriage may well be regarded as one of convenience merely. But if it be some special degree of luxurious pleasure or some intellectual state, with no external reward, it is a pure love match.

If even the old classical learning were nothing but mere useless luxury, its devotees would still be entitled to the respect given to a genuine if faded aristocracy which refuses to compromise with a changed materialistic world and prefers to live in its ancient lineage of the mind. Perhaps we may put the luxurious claims of the classical learning higher still. For one distinction between it and more modern studies is that, while they are in constant change and flux, the classical world is fixed and static. In studying it we are as wise as Fate itself, for its past and future is unfolded before us as a complete finished whole. While the modern learning knows no such certainty but is distracted with doubts and fears for the future, the students of classical learning can change nothing and are responsible for nothing, but are as gods on Olympus ῥεῖα ζώοντες eating the ambrosia of second aorists and quaffing the nectar of a civilization two-thousand-year-old in bottle.

So far in confession and acceptance of the charge brought against classical education of being a luxury. But in passing to consider whether it is anything else but a luxury and submitting it to the severe practical tests of modern conditions, the wise defender will begin by making extensive concessions. Men like Mr. Baldwin and Lord Hewart in addresses to the Classical Association have borne witness not only to the luxury of classical education but to its power to enlighten and fortify their minds; but they are neither ordinary men nor in ordinary occupations, and it is by its value

to the average men in ordinary walks of life that the place of the Greek and Latin classics in our system of education will be determined. In assessing value, we have to take into account not only absolute but relative value. Modern subjects of education show fruit of some sort almost from the first, but not education in the Greek and Latin classics. He is a remarkable boy who has any appreciation of the real quality of their literature before he is seventeen, and the study of Greek and Latin, by reason of its difficulty, is extortionate of time. It is wise to admit at the outset that the vast majority of boys, who learn with difficulty to construe Cæsar, or a simple Ode of Horace, and get no farther, would have employed their energy much more profitably in a modern language, or some other short-term investment of knowledge, and that doubtless is why the ex-headmaster of Harrow School recently suggested, though with a wry face, that even Latin might have to be dropped from the ordinary school curriculum. Let it be admitted then at once that the advantages of a classical education are wholly illusory unless the student is willing to go a fair distance. The immediate practical question is, what is a fair distance and how far must he go before a classical education makes him as good (or better) return for his trouble as education in a more modern subject? To that question may be given an answer simple and precise. "As far as will enable him to do a Latin prose that an Oxford don might mark with a Beta or a Beta +." Unless he can get that far, he had better spend his energies in more modern subjects. If he can go farther and achieve an Alpha, the return increases in geometrical progression. As for Greek, it is not worth while for a boy to begin unless he is likely to get far enough in his studies to be able to read a plain straightforward piece of tragic iambics with moderate ease. These are extensive concessions to the critics of classical education but having made them as fully and completely as possible one can advance with no risk of being misunderstood to the further proposition that, these conditions satisfied, a classical education has greater value than any other, and that not merely for the exceptional boy or for special careers but for the average boy whose work will lie in the ordinary walks of life. It is assumed as it must be laying down these general rules that there is no marked bent in the scholar towards other studies. Rarely does it reveal itself early in the average boy, but where it does, and stands the test that a good teacher will know how to apply, it will, of course, abrogate any general rule.

A knowledge of Latin will not do many of the services with which it is credited. It is, for example, not a great help to the acquisition of modern Latin languages. A good Latin scholar will not be helped as much by his Latin to acquiring French or Italian, as he would be by a knowledge of Italian to French or *vice versa*. And it is easy to exaggerate the service that Latin can do in improving the knowledge of one's own language. Quite elementary Latin may save us from some mistakes in English, but not so surely as quick wit sharpened by studies that have an immediate and practical utility. The claim for a classical education, that it is probably

the surest foundation of future intellectual efficiency in all departments of life, must in my view be rested entirely on its training in Latin prose.

Paradoxically, the value of Latin as an instrument of instruction depends very largely on its defects as a language. The genius of Greek is free and as elastic as air; it has an immense and copious vocabulary; it forms compounds as freely as English or German; its constructions are as varied as its inflexions; it expresses the most fanciful abstractions as easily and readily as a plain fact. Master the inflexions and the syntax, and the language is so flexible that you can twist it easily into any shape you will. After a certain point of advancement in the language has been reached, nothing is easier than to acquire in Greek the fatal fluency which makes words the master of the sense. And what has happened to many a good modern Grecian happened to the language itself. Greek, by reason of its very flexibility and copiousness, becomes in its decline slack and garrulous. Latin has none of the virtues of Greek as a language. Despite the genius of a few writers who achieved ease and elegance despite these faults, it is naturally a stiff, leathery and clumsy language. For that very reason it retained its strength much longer. Cicero is the exception that proves the rule that Latin improved with age, and Tacitus the last of its great masters of prose is the best and most characteristic of all. Even in its final stages of decay, Latin still retains its strength and dignity. How much finer is the Latin of the Vulgate than the Greek of the New Testament! When Latin died it was not of any organic disease but of rheumatism and stiffness in the joints.

These defects in the structure and idiom of the language carry with them one supreme advantage for the purposes of mental training. When you translate one modern language into another, you translate words into corresponding words, subject, of course, to certain differences, after all minor, in the respective idioms of the languages. You can do the same in translation into Greek. The most turgid and metaphorical passages of Shakespeare will go quite easily into Greek with little more than the alteration of the English words into the corresponding Greek words. But in translating a piece of English prose into Latin, you do not merely Latinize the words. You translate the sense and meaning of the English into the corresponding sense and meaning in Latin—a much more elaborate process, which begins by stripping off the words until the sense is naked and you may have to go farther still and study the naked sense in its skeleton. Having done that, you have then to reconstruct the whole thing in Latinity. The stylist will achieve elegance in the Latin words in which he clothes the meaning; but apart from any stylistic quality in the resultant Latin, successful anatomising of the body of sense, clothed and often concealed and distorted by the original words, is the essence of Latin prose composition. With this anatomising, the resultant prose will be, if not elegant, at any rate intelligible; without, it will not be Latin at all but dog. If the study of Latin can be carried to the point at which this way of dealing with language becomes second nature, the scholar will have acquired an

instrument of intellectual efficiency comparable to that of the short Roman sword on the field of battle. And he will owe it to his Latin proses.

Bacon, himself with Grotius the last of the moderns except Madvig to write good Latin in quantity, well expressed the tyranny of words over sense :

> At idola fori omnium molestissima sunt ; quæ ex fœdere verborum et nominum se insinuarunt in intellectum. Credunt enim homines rationem suam verbis imperare. Sed fit etiam ut verba vim suam super intellectum retorqueant et reflectant ; quod philosophiam et scientias reddidit sophisticas et inactivas. Verba autem plerumque ex captu vulgi induntur atque per lineas, vulgari intellectui maxime conspicuas, res secant. Quum autem intellectus acutior aut observatio diligentior eas lineas transferre velit, ut illæ sint magis secundum naturam ; verba obstrepunt. (*Novum Organum*, Chap. 59).

Against the tyranny of words here described by Bacon, the assiduous practice of Latin prose in youth is the most certain prophylactic that is known to education.

They mis-state the case for classical education who praise the beauty of Greek and Latin literature, the splendour of the histories of Greece and Rome, and the value of their lessons for our own times, that we may draw from them. For those who can, Greek literature is doubtless best read in the original language, but it is astonishing how much of the essential quality, especially of the prose works, survives in translations. In Greek, as a rule, what the writer has to say is even more important than the way in which he says it, so living and varied is the message of Greek thought for the modern world, and it comes through well in translation. Blessings on the Loeb library ! But as for the majestic story of Roman history, how little of it by comparison is to be read in Latin. No one would read Livy except for an occasional reference when he has Mommsen ; there is more of the majesty and grandeur of the Roman Empire in the pages of Gibbon than in any Latin author if we except that great passage in the sixth Æneid and occasional bits of Claudian. The quality of Virgil and to a less extent of Horace, evaporates in translation, but rare as it is one would hesitate to mortgage to it the best years of school life if that were all that Latin study had to give a boy, and still less claim that its just appreciation, however luxurious the pleasure that it gave, would result in increased efficiency in competitive modern life. There is singularly little of real value in Latin literature in what it has to say apart from the way in which it is said—another aspect of inferiority to Greek. The just ground on which to defend classical education is not to be found here, in the refinements that appertain to the luxuries rather than to the utilities of this learning, but in the probability that reasonable proficiency in Latin prose composition will make a critical mind accustomed to sense the realities under their verbal forms and disguises.

Nor is that a slight endowment in whatever kind of work in which the scholar's life may afterwards be cast. One of my old schoolmasters used to tell me of a Manchester merchant prince two generations ago who used to

select the future heads of departments in his business on the results of a paper in Latin verse composition. The successful candidates did not, of course, become at once heads of departments, but it was from their number, if they made good, that the heads were selected. " I do not want," the old man would say, " boys who are stuffed with knowledge. They will learn with me all the facts that they need to know in business. I do want young men who have ability to apply what they know and I know no better test than a set of Latin verses of a boy's versatility and adaptability." After all, the system on which we recruit our civil service is not very different even to-day.

Admittedly, there is much more needed than a critical faculty acquired through Latin prose if a man has to deal successfully with many practical problems of life and business, and especially with crisis. There are even conditions in which the possession of a critical faculty in excess may be a positive handicap of success. It rarely goes with originality or with creative power. Perhaps the most typical product in our time of classical education was the late Lord Oxford. His achievement was high, and yet it was not the classical Asquith but a modernist rival who rose highest to the terrible argument of the war. But while Asquith both for good and ill was very definitely the product of a system of education, neither the virtues nor the faults of his rival are to be ascribed to a rival system. The power of swift decision, which Asquith lacked, was the gift of temperament not of education. One kind of education may tend to weaken initiative and tighten the brakes, but no education will create a bold adventurous spirit unless the man has already been endowed with it by nature and temperament. The critical spirit may be regarded as an insurance against the grosser errors of judgment and temper, but is certainly no guarantee of success in special and exceptional circumstances. And what holds in affairs of state, holds, too, in matters of ordinary life and business. The creative and originating minds who achieve both the signal success and the signal failure, commonly owe little to education, whether classical or modern.

The claim is sometimes put forward for modern subjects of education and especially for science that they tend to encourage the creative qualities of mind that classical study chills to convention and orthodoxy. We are even invited to put our national affairs in the control of the men of science who, we are told, will organize success more surely and speedily, and it is a familiar theme that the conditions of success in business life have changed and that a new scientific spirit must replace the old empiricism and adventurousness. That conditions are changing rapidly and that education must adapt itself and change with circumstance is very true. But we need not hastily accept at their face value the claims put forward for science or the implied disparagement of the older systems of education. The scientific spirit is ubiquitous and covers far more departments in the field of knowledge than are ordinarily comprehended by the term of science. There is even a science of classical philology whose methods are as exact and scholarly if the results are less momentous than any researches into the

laws of mechanics or of physics. Further, whatever may be thought of the counsels of science, its methods are not those for which easy success is assured. You cannot treat human beings, whether for political or for any other purpose, as the passive subjects of your scientific will. On the contrary they have a will of their own, and are only too likely to resent the spirit of science which necessarily appears harsh and dogmatic when it is brought up against a problem in which human nature is concerned. Science knows nothing of the art of persuasion; the older forms of education have studied it deeply and not unsuccessfully.

But the prime fallacy of this argument for scientific education when it is employed not to supplement the old learning but to supersede it and bring it into contempt is that science speaks with one voice. It is not true. The mechanical and natural sciences are not one kingdom owning one allegiance, overseen by one eye and with a single philosophy and aim, but a collection of separate and even warring principalities, discordant in counsel and in objective. The voice of the biologist is not that of the mechanical engineer; the counsels of science lead in as many different directions as there are departments of physical and mechanical science.

There is in fact no such thing as an architectonic physical, and mechanical science. The nearest approach to architectonic science is precisely in these more liberal studies of philology, history, poetry, and philosophy which we are bidden to despise. They make man—man himself, not the natural phenomenon by which he is surrounded—their chief concern. Whence he came and whither he goes, what is the supreme good in life, the shaping of his course towards happiness, his passions and frailties, his joys and sorrows, his sins and his goodness—here is the very stuff of human life spread out before us in the older studies. And it is absent from the natural sciences which are concerned only with man in his environment and as affected, whether as conquered or conqueror, by natural laws. It would be foolish to identify these larger and humaner studies with classical education in the narrow sense, but the study of the history and literature of the ancient world has this advantage, that its problems, many of which were very like our own in essentials, are expressed in much simpler and more concrete terms. The history and problems of our own time are set out in characters too vast, sprawling and uncertain to be read; in the ancient world the letters are written smaller and are easier to read. Besides, in their case we know both the beginning and end of fate.

# PORTRAIT OF A DREAM

By C. K. MUNRO

I HAD met Tierney once—in the drawing-room of a cousin of my wife's who moved in a kind of society very different from ours. Adamson I had never seen, but of course had heard of. The public memory is so short and reputations succeed each other so rapidly that it is probably necessary to say that Tierney, at that time, had a reputation as a novelist quite apart from any other. It was universally said that he was misusing his admittedly prodigious powers in the interests of some obscure theories, the value of which none could discover, except a small band of devotees to whom he was something of a prophet. These theories were not primarily political, being concerned with the life of the individual, but their effect was to drive Tierney into violent antagonism to all modern progressive democratic movements.

I admit that what I had heard before I met him, mainly from my wife, who had read one or two of his books, did not predispose me towards him. He was well connected, being a cousin of the Duke of Raneleigh, and it was said that at one time he had been a member of a rather notorious set in London society, but had suddenly broken away from them to devote himself to literature. I expected to find him a long-haired, unhealthy, impractical artistic kind of person, and I was agreeably surprised. He was a man of about thirty-five, extremely pale and very thin, and I remember the extreme brightness of his glance ; but his dark hair, though long, was not unduly long, and though he was the most delicate and sensitive-looking person that I think I have ever seen in my life, one could not call such a pale, clear skin unhealthy. He spoke, I remember, with a good deal of vehemence and assurance, in a curious, gentle yet urgent and pleading voice, but what he said contained a great deal of practical good sense, which surprised me very much.

Adamson, of course, was a legend on account of his astonishing adventures among the tribes on the Indian frontier, and I suppose that even now he is not entirely forgotten. He was a man of the people, but had risen by his activities to a position of great authority in the secret Councils of the Government on Indian questions. It was in the days when the Indian affairs were hotly debated, and Adamson's opinions were known to be markedly progressive, a fact which was regarded as of great importance in the situation, since it was well known that many Indians would follow Adamson when they would follow no one else, and many people at home were prepared to subscribe to any opinion which he might hold on the matter.

Later the names of these two very different men were inevitably coupled, but I suppose no one had ever thought of them together on the day when I

met Tierney in my cousin's drawing-room. But after that I, at least, always thought of them together, because on that occasion Tierney spoke at some length of Adamson, and of the effect of his attitude in a man who held his unique position. He regarded him evidently as an extraordinary danger, and I remember well the sudden feeling of *hatred in the air* that invaded the company while he was speaking on this topic. Everyone clearly felt embarrassment, but it was not any actual words used by Tierney that produced this, but the sudden appearance impalpably of an overwhelming emotion, naked, if I may use the expression, in a company where feelings as well as persons are generally clothed. When the crisis came, I must confess that after that experience, I was not altogether surprised, but that it should happen in front of my very eyes seemed to me a thing as strange as it was startling.

The processsion, as many people still remember, was due to take place on a day in late August, and the weather that year had been peculiarly dry and hot. The day of the procession itself had been extremely hot, with a thunderous tendency in the air, which, however, to everyone's relief, cleared away as the evening came on.

Through one of my wife's connexions who held an official post, we had been presented with two excellent seats, but I remember that all was not smooth in our household, for I was irritated at my wife taking so long to get ready that I thought we should be late. In my anxiety I remember making rather a sharp remark to her, to which she replied equally sharply ; and it crossing my mind that if we got into an argument we should be later than ever, so I firmly left the room without saying anything and walked out to the chemist's and bought some sticking-plaster that I needed. And I remember very distinctly that the man in counting out my change in silver remarked that he could buy quite a decent gravestone for himself with that amount of money, which always struck me afterwards as a strange remark.

When we arrived at the street through which the procession had to pass on its way to Westminster, there was a vast but orderly crowd assembled, and all traffic had already been cleared from the roadway, which therefore presented that curious deserted appearance that one notices on such occasions, in contrast to the dense concourse of humanity on the pavements. It was at once clear that an extremely wise thing had been done—though at the time many criticized it as an unheard-of innovation—in timing the procession for the early evening instead of the middle of the day. The day would have been unbearably hot, but the evening, while still warm enough to make it comfortable to sit out of doors for an indefinite time, was comparatively cool and fresh, and I remember that the sky was of a most wonderful blue, and the light had that clear brilliance which is so noticeable towards the close of a bright summer day in London.

As I have said, there was no traffic in the roadway, but the pavements were thronged with masses of people, most of them stationary, but some threading their way slowly along, and behind the masses lining the pave-

ments were stands that had been erected for ticket-holders, and behind these again, the windows of the houses in the street, which had been decorated and many of which had been hired out for the evening, no doubt for very large sums. Both stands and windows were already practically full.

Our seats proved to be in one of the stands about half-way down the rather narrow street in which the St. Martin's Club is situated. They were, in fact, just in front of the Club windows, which of course had been retained for the use of the members ; and as we approached them, a strange incident occurred which may have had nothing to do with what followed, but which I have always felt since had some sinister, unpleasant significance connected with it. I have already said that all traffic had been cleared from the roads. It was with amazement, therefore, that I suddenly saw, drawn up in the roadway just in front of our stand, of all things, an enormous brightly-painted *coach*, with four horses ; and perched right on the top of this coach an extremely striking-looking girl, at whom everyone in the crowd was gazing, though she did not appear to be aware of it. I stood gaping with surprise at this fantastic vision for what seemed to be quite a time, although in fact it can only have been a moment, when I was suddenly recalled to my senses by my wife whispering in my ear—" Lord Thearle." I suppose this means little to most people nowadays, but at that time the aged and eccentric Lord Thearle, and especially his stage coach, in which he frequently travelled, were well known by repute to everyone. His daughter—if she was his daughter, for some people said she was not—was if possible even better known for her outrageous escapades. I therefore understood instantly what my wife meant when she referred to Lord Thearle, and it was clear that the enormous crowd all understood too. Apparently Lord Thearle had elected to come to the procession in his coach, and owing to his exalted position, the police were allowing him the most extreme latitude possible, knowing full well that if they could persuade him and his coach into their proper destinations in time for the ceremonies, it would be much less trouble than that which would inevitably be caused by trying to force him.

But Lord Thearle himself was not to be seen—indeed it was revealed afterwards that he was not there at all, having been detained in bed with a cold—but only his daughter, perched on the top of the high coach, so that she was higher than all the crowd on the pavement, and than most of the people in the stand, and almost on a level with those looking from the club windows. As I gazed at her, having at last appreciated who she was, she waved towards one of the windows and said in a clear ringing voice, which was evidently intended to be heard by the whole assembly near by, " I suppose that's one of the lavatory attendants, is it ? " and she laughed as though she had made a joke. Shocked as I was by these words, my eye travelled in the direction which she had indicated, and there in the window, along with one or two others, was Tierney, looking pale as ever, and even thinner than when I had last seen him. There was no doubt for whom this remark was intended, for Tierney's companions in the window were all

looking towards him, as if waiting to see how he would take it. The crowd had, except for one or two, greeted Lady Pamela's remark with astonished silence, but now gradually in all directions heads were turning towards the window to see what was happening there. Tierney thus became the focus of a thousand eyes on both sides of the road, and I can well remember exactly the look on his face at that moment. He never moved a muscle, but continued to gaze straight in front of him ; the only sign he gave was a very faint flush that appeared quite evenly all over his pale face.

When I looked again towards Lady Pamela on the coach, she was in conversation with a policeman, leaning down from her eminence and speaking to him in a very free and easy, but I am bound to say pleasant, style. The upshot of their conversation was that at a word from her, the coach began to move slowly along, and soon disappeared from view, but not before one further exchange had occurred. Just as the coach began to move, Lady Pamela called out, apparently this time addressing Tierney in a tone of mockery, " You see, he's here ! " and she waved her hand and turned her head in the direction of a window on the other side of the street. I could not at first see where she was pointing to, for the coach was in the way, but as it moved on, I now perceived that we were placed right opposite to a very large imposing box in two tiers, built specially, at the back of one of the stands. The whole was draped in red cloth, with various emblazonings in gold on it, and was obviously intended for the use of some very exalted personages from India. Both tiers, indeed, were full of splendid-looking Indians in their magnificent costumes, and all the more conspicuous, therefore, were two Englishmen dressed in ordinary morning clothes and sitting right in the middle of the upper tier. The whole scene stood out with extreme brilliance because it happened to be illuminated by the slanting rays of the sun, which left our side of the street in comparative shadow.

It was in the direction of the upper tier of this box that Lady Pamela had waved her hand as she began to move ; and now turning her head too in that direction, she waved again. Immediately the Englishman in the box on the left of his companion, that is, on the right from our point of view, rose stiffly but extremely courteously, and gave a stiff low bow with military precision to Lady Pamela, and sat down again ; and it was instantly whispered in the crowd round about us that this was no other than the legendary Adamson. Who the other Englishman in the box was, no one seemed to know, nor, oddly enough, did I ever learn afterwards, but it may be supposed that I looked at Adamson with extreme interest. He was of middle height, his fair hair was cropped short, and he wore a quite ordinary-looking blue suit with a stiff collar. But it was his eyes that caught my attention particularly, for even from that distance I seemed to discern something special about them. They seemed to be of a peculiarly light brown, and one would have said that nothing could daunt them, and indeed a moment later I was to have proof that this was so.

Lady Pamela, who was by this time a few yards down the road, having acknowledged Adamson's bow, turned once more to throw a glance in

Tierney's direction. While I was watching her, suddenly I heard a voice that I recognized, the somewhat high-pitched voice of Tierney, call out from behind and above me :

" He's a damned scoundrel ! "

At this the crowd began to laugh, and Adamson in his seat across the road smiled slightly and whispered something to his neighbour ; and it was at once clear, clear somehow as if it had been announced by everyone, though nobody in fact spoke a word, that in the contest thus adumbrated Tierney was the weaker party. The laugh which greeted his remark told that. Had Adamson spoken, no one would have laughed. It was not so much at that moment that Adamson was stronger than Tierney, though I felt that a moment or two later with extraordinary force ; it was rather that everyone, the whole world, was against Tierney, for no one feared him, whereas everyone had an instinctive awe of Adamson. Tierney must have felt something of this, and determined to defy it, for a moment later he called out again much louder and more fiercely :

" I said he's a damned scoundrel."

This time the crowd did not laugh at once, looking towards Adamson for a lead. But when they saw him gazing back at Tierney with those strange light-coloured eyes of his, lit with nothing but wonder, as at some strange thing, then some laughed again. But it was an uneasy laugh this time, and it dwindled away into an odd silence. And then I was suddenly aware that something was happening above my head and a little behind me, but before I had time to turn round, the shot had been fired. It hit the low balustrade just in front of Adamson, who now sat rigid gazing straight back at where it had come from. I could not take my gaze from those eyes of his, and at that moment they seemed to me far more terrible than the revolver of his opponent ; so that, knowing as I did from some intense effort of consciousness though I could not see it, that Tierney's revolver was poised for another shot, my sympathies instantly flew to the support of what seemed to me the weaker man, and agonizingly I tried to use my will to help him to raise his weapon and shoot higher this time, so as to get his mark. Inevitably the shot came. Adamson never moved. Tierney had not raised his weapon high enough, and the second shot also struck the balustrade. Why he fired no more I do not know : presumably his friends restrained him. Anyhow the fact remains that he did not, and everyone seemed to know that he would not, for the instant the second shot had missed, the tension that for a moment or two had been unbearable, relaxed ; people began to move, and among the crowds on both sides of the road there was some commotion. A police inspector appeared, and a lane being made for him through the crowd, he went into the St. Martin's Club.

As everyone knows, in spite of considerable influence brought to bear on his behalf, Tierney was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, but died before six months of it had been completed.

As for Adamson, he suddenly rose from his seat, clapped a black hat which had an incongruously large brim on his head, disappeared for a few

seconds, and then appeared in the roadway below. He looked about him, quite unaffected by the fact that all eyes were on him, as if thinking which was his best way, and then, turning to his left, he walked straight down the perfectly clear roadway, no one preventing him, with a peculiar jerky gait. About fifty yards down the road, he suddenly dived in among the crowds lining the pavement and was lost to view. It was at this moment that the first troops of the procession came into sight at the other end of the street.

UN MAGISTRAT ECLAIRE

By Forain

*By Courtesy of the Leicester Galleries*

# STUDIES IN THE ART OF LAUGHTER

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

NO one can be expected to love Satire exactly, at least no layman. For the technician it is otherwise: all writers worth their salt value the beloved " Ben " as much as Herrick did, and would sell their shirt to be with him for a half-hour at the *Sun*, the *Dog*, the *Tunne;* and Gustave Flaubert attracts all penmen's ink-stained hearts—all who are authentic *hommes-plumes* as he called it, that is to say—and of course *in spite of* the fact that this outrageous Norman spent his days in word-sculpture of the besotted Bourgeois Man (lower than Neanderthal Man by far—an ape almost it seems) out of the very stuff and texture of mud, and of gutter-mud at that! His mud-images delight us just as much as the marmorial flattery of our kind that the Greeks went in for. But that is *us:* if *we*, who are writers, do not give a damn whether it be god or a sewer-rat that comes out of the hat, provided that the man who elicits it be a superlative conjurer—as Flaubert was, or " rare Ben Jonson "—that is not to say that the man of the great public (who is not interested at all in the " shop " of the illusionist or even the most prodigious sleight-of-hand) is likely to feel that way about it. No: *your* face, *your* character, *your* behaviour—all that is most intimately *you*—is what the satirist takes for his target. And you do not thank him for it. Why should you? That would be too much to ask!

You cannot feel very warmly, therefore, towards his art: for what is *his* art after all, as you must see it, but the technique of human defamation? But Tragedy—take the art of tragedy: that is not in a much better case than Satire, perhaps, from the point of view of the mere onlooker—one of those who suffer the spell, not one of those who promote it. For the *destructive* element is not much more pleasant than the grotesque, if it comes to that: and the " bitter " laughter of the satirist is at least no more humanly repellent than the weeping-and-gnashing-of-teeth, the howls of rage and bellows of sorrow, inseparable from the activities of the tragic muse.

Fortifying myself, at all events, with such arguments as these—and mollifying you, I hope, in the process—I will undertake the canvass of this rather sinister craft, and talk to you about Satire and satirists for a while. For Satire is very much in the news. It is (whether we like it or not) an art that is coming into fashion again, after a long eclipse.

Satire undoubtedly requires to be redefined somewhat. None of the traditional definitions will quite fit what the new schools of Satire that are arising—or have arisen—to-day would understand by that term. But when I say " schools of satire," they are not referred to as schools, and

*satire* is not how they would describe what they do, as a rule. In point of fact, the term " satire " is never applied to a great deal of present-day artistic expression which, in any other period, would promptly, and as a matter of course, have been labelled Satire. The fact is that we are at once less sensitive and far more touchy than were people a century or two ago. It is this change which imposes upon us a new definition of Satire.

In the eighteenth century men were, on the one hand, far *more* exacting about delineations of Man in the abstract : but, on the other hand, far less exacting about delineations of their particular selves. No popular portrait-painter in 1934 could deal with his humblest sitter as did Goya (the great Spanish court-painter contemporary with Wellington) with his master the King of Spain. (And as to the Queen of Spain, to her he behaved, if anything, with less ceremony.) Should the contemporary portraitist take it into his head to do so, he would cease to be a " popular portrait-painter " on the spot.

It is often pointed out, how any well-to-do middle-class householder to-day—with his lift, refrigidor, bathroom, toilet accessories, telephone, and the rest—enjoys luxuries and physical advantages denied to even the greatest monarchs of the past. That is no doubt true ; and undoubtedly of a piece with that is the high standard of flattery exacted, by this privileged latter-day man, of the photographer or the portrait-painter. No moderately rich woman, commissioning a portrait, would stand for a moment the arrogant display of inconsiderate truthfulness that a Queen of Spain supported, in portrait after portrait, regarding her homely person, at the hands of her court painter, Francisco Goya. The modern matron would describe such a rendering of herself as " a caricature," and would return it to the artist who had been so foolhardy as to perpetrate it. And no photograph of a " society-beauty " at the present time (when all females domiciled in Mayfair are " beauties ") is comparable, for " photographic " accuracy, with the oil-paintings done of the faces of Empresses and Princesses of the past. The camera of a fashionable photographer is much further removed from Nature than the canvases of Holbein or Velasquez.

Practically any portrait by an " old master," of a Dutch, German, Spanish or Italian notability, would in our time be classified (if it were incumbent upon anyone to determine to what class of work it belonged) as " caricature." Or, equally well, it might be described as *satiric*, if that were desired. El Greco's pallid, unnaturally elongated and byzantinized, heads of Spanish grandees, would be one sort of satire ; the bloated apparitions (accepted as lifelike portraits at the time) from the brush of Frans Hals would be another. But neither would be recognized by those portrayed, at our present stage of evolution, as " truthful " images. So what is " satire " for one age is not " satire " for another. What is " truth " for one period, is slander for the next. Satire is a very relative term indeed, as you see.

That for the artist there are two main orders of truth, that must always

be insisted upon. There is (1) the " truth " of Natural Science : and there is (2) the truth of Romance. As I have said elsewhere, it is people's vanity, nothing else, that causes them to use the term *satire* at all ! It might be said that satire is the " truth " of the intellect, whereas the " truth " of the beauty-doctor is that of the average romantic sensualism. Your person, and your behaviour, as seen by the eye of Satire, would be very close to what it would appear to the eye of Science. In some cases, of course, it would be identical. It would be absurd to claim that *satiric* truth (or scientific truth) was the only truth. But it is equally absurd to say that " Truth is beauty—beauty truth."

Indeed " truth " as that is understood in a Court of Law (of the " truth and nothing but the truth " variety) and the sort of " truth " we require of another man, to enable us to orientate ourselves in the practical transactions of life, is certainly satiric truth rather than romantic truth. " This Desirable Residence For Sale" the house-agents' advertisement invariably runs. But usually a highly emotional truth is conveyed thereby. The *true* truth would as often as not run " This *undesirable*—overpriced, inconvenient, ugly, damp, difficult-of-access, thoroughly out-of-date residence, etc., for sale."

But, as I have said, if this great touchiness, or personal arrogance, is noticeable upon the part of the sitter for a contemporary portrait, it is quite the reverse regarding the same person's standards towards the pictorial presentation of Man in the abstract—or it is apt to be, where any pretensions to being " abreast of the times " is in question. There (when we are dealing with a truly " modern " man or woman) the greatest latitude is allowed, and even exacted. Indeed it could be said without exaggeration that the present day is the Satirists' paradise ! My dear sir, *this*—our epoch—should produce, sooner or later, a satiric art transcending any satire that has ever been done—Rome of the *Satyricon* and the France of Rabelais not excluded.

Whatever may be said for or against Satire in the absolute—and in such a time as ours he who sets his face against Satire brands himself as a racketeer or a fool—at least it must be allowed that Satire is very *cold*. And that is good ! There is nothing of the hot innards of Freud-infected art—no " Fhantasias of the Unconscious " about Satire, *that* you must allow. No, it is all constructed out of the dry shells and pelts of things. The surface of the visible machinery of life alone is used. The Quixotic technique—the wires that propel Volpone—the corybantics of Seithenin, in the pages of Peacock—the bustling manners of the satiric art do not lend themselves to swamp-effects, and to the smudgings of aura-lined spirit-pictures. All is metallic—all is external.

It is easier to achieve those polished and resistant surfaces of a great externalist art in Satire, or rather Satire lends itself to *nothing else*. More naturally than can be done beneath the troubled impulse of the lyrical afflatus, in Satire you reach the great classic lines of the skeleton of

things. All the nineteenth-century poetry of France, for instance, from the *Fleurs du Mal* onwards, was stiffened with Satire too, as is all the best English poetry to-day. Messrs. T. S. Eliot, Roy Campbell, Auden, to name three of the most eminent among contemporary Anglo-Saxon poets, are satirists first and foremost. *The Hippopotamus*, the *Waste Land*, *Sweeny Agonistes*, the *Wayzgoose*, *The Georgiad*, *The Orators* are all works of Satire pure and simple. (And most contemporary painting and sculpture of any power is essentially Satire, too.)

But there is a stiffening of Satire in *everything* good, of " the grotesque," which is the same thing—the non-human outlook must be there (beneath the fluff and pulp which is all that is seen by the majority) to correct our soft conceit. This cannot be gainsaid. Satire is *good !*

But I realize that, in these pæans to Satire, I shall be flying in the face of accepted opinion. And there is no opinion, on the subject of Satire, that is so firmly rooted, as that Satire should function ethically, or not at all. That I have been ignoring entirely ; for no dogmatic moralist sanction seems to me required to play the critic and the artist in one—which is to be a *satirist*—or *scientist and artist* would perhaps be better ; any more than a man has to take out a licence to be a landscape-painter, or to be a bio-chemist, though in due course that may come, I am quite aware.

* * *

How can Satire justify itself—justify its " cruelty," its destructive values, its headman's rôle—without the *moral* sanction, it has repeatedly been asked ? For Satire can only exist in contrast to something else—it is a shadow, and an ugly shadow at that, of some perfection. That is the idea. And it is so disagreeable, and so painful (at least in the austere sense in which we are to understand it here) that no one would pursue it *for its own sake*, or take up the occupation of the satirist from choice. The reply to this, of course, is to be sought, first and foremost, in that neglected factor, *style* (and, further, in the fact that the artist is compelled to some extent to supply his own police).

But it is my belief that in fact even Satire *for its own sake*—as much as anything else for its own sake—is possible : and that even the most virtuous and well-proportioned of men is only a shadow, after all, of some perfection ; a shadow of an imperfect, and hence an " ugly," sort. And as to *laughter*, if you allow it in one place you must, I think, allow it in another. Laughter—humour and wit—has a function in relation to our tender consciousness ; a function similar to that of art. It is the preserver much more than the destroyer. And, in a sense, *everyone* should be laughed at or else *no one* should be laughed at. It seems that ultimately that is the alternative.

When Addison introduced the word " genius," to take the place of the word used up to that time, " wit," he did us all a disservice. Wit as a generic term for all those possessed of an excellent judgment, would tend (apart from the advantages resulting from its less pretentious sound) to

marshal the gifted upon the *laughing* side of the world. But that little change of a popular monosyllable made all the difference, and to-day *the laugh* is not wholly respectable : it requires to be explained, if not excused.

But satire is a special sort of laughter : *the laugh* alone possesses great powers of magnification. But *the laugh* that magnified Falstaff till he grew to be a giant like Pantagruel, is not the laugh of the satirist, which threw up the Maids of Honour in Brobdingnag. Now, no one resents the size of Falstaff : he is a routine figure of fun, the jolly toper. But everyone resents the scale of the Maids of Honour in *Gulliver*, and resents all those sights and sounds that assail our senses in their gigantic company.

The text of Swift is bristling with very painful passages indeed. There is no question here of the mere he-man vulgarity of the egregious Scottish surgeon, Smollett. It is much more uncomfortable than that, not alone for the nice-minded but without exception for all the spokesmen of Mr. Everybody.

In this painful effect of true satire we might expect to find the main avenue of attack of the moralist—he might say that it was *ill-natured* instead of *good-natured*, as is mere burlesque. But it is not to that that we must look to-day (when, as artists, we are taking our measures of defence) as being the spot likely to draw the fire of the ethical batteries.

The painful nature of satire was recognized by Hazlitt, but promptly misunderstood ; for he was looking for something in satire which under no circumstances belongs there, and which in consequence he could not find.

" Bare-faced impudence, an idiot imbecility, are his dramatic commonplaces," he writes of Ben Jonson. So, although one would have thought that Ben Jonson had acquitted himself to admiration of what is after all, in the narrowest sense, the satirist's job, the good Hazlitt finds fault with him for that very reason—because, in fact, Hazlitt did not at all like satire. Ben Jonson, the perfect satirist, was rebuked because he did not manage to fall short of that sinister ideal !

" Sheer ignorance, bare-faced impudence, or idiot imbecility, are his (Ben Jonson's) dramatic commonplaces—things that provoke pity or disgust, instead of laughter."

But why should not idiot imbecility provoke laughter ? Obviously the answer is : Because, being found in a human being, it is " letting down " the species, and so to laugh at it would be unethical and *inhuman*. Physical deformity, again, is often comic. Many dwarfs are highly grotesque (superbly grotesque, one may say without offence in the case of dwarfs). And they even relish the sensation of their funniness. But most people only laugh covertly at such spectacles, or sternly repress a smile. For, they would say, these are " things " which should " provoke pity or disgust, instead of laughter." Or such is the Anglo-Saxon point of view.

But the dago is different. Dwarfs, in Spain, are the object of constant mirth, on the part of their " normal " fellow-citizens. Everyone pokes fun at them, there is no hypocrisy, as with us. and the dwarf gets on very

well indeed. He is treated as a pet animal, and enjoys himself very much. Also, since he has a great deal of practice, from morning till night, he often ends by being a first-class clown. In short, neither disgust nor pity is experienced by these dagoes where their dwarfs are concerned. They feel, perhaps, that God has made them a present of these hideous oddities to be their sport: and the dwarf feels that too, and is quite puffed-up with his own importance and proud of his god-sent job of joker or of public joke.

And, after all, pulling long faces at the dwarf, and surrounding him with an atmosphere of inhuman pity (or "disgust") is bad for the dwarf. It is better to explode with laughter at the sight of him—better for all concerned.

So far so good: but what of the shell-shocked man, for instance? He is often very funny. Who has not on occasion (with shame) suppressed an involuntary laugh? But that is like laughing at the contortions of a dying man, and it would be too brutal a society that made a habit of laughing at its shell-shocked persons—especially as it would be to the society of the laughers to which ultimately the responsibility for these disfigurements would have to be brought home. Therefore there is no society that does not refrain from guffawing at the antics, however "screamingly funny," of its shell-shocked men and war-idiots, and its poison-gas morons, and its mutilated battle-wrecks.

But here is also a principle, of use in the analysis of the comic, and so of use in considering Satire. *Perfect laughter*, if there could be such a thing, would be inhuman. And it would select as the objects of its mirth as much the antics dependent upon pathologic maladjustments, injury, or disease, as the antics of clumsy and imperfectly functioning healthy people.

At this point it is, perhaps, desirable to note that in general human beings display no delicacy about spiritual or mental shortcomings, in their neighbours, but only physical. To be a fool with a robust body can be no more pleasant for the person in question than being an intelligent dwarf: yet no one scruples to laugh at the former, but parades a genteel sensitiveness regarding the latter. Infinitely more pain is inflicted by laughter provoked by some non-physical cause than by that provoked by a physical one. So do not let us take too much for granted that we can put our finger blindfold upon *the supreme cad.*

Our deepest laughter is not, however, inhuman laughter. And yet it is non-personal and non-moral. And it enters fields which are commonly regarded as the preserve of more "serious" forms of reaction. There is no reason at all why we should not burst out laughing at a fœtus, for instance. We should, after all, only be laughing *at ourselves!*—at ourselves early in our mortal career.

The wind that blows through satire *is* that same bleak element that we meet with in *King Lear*, in *Timon*, or in *Macbeth*. Which of Shakespeare's supreme plays but could, doctored a little by a competent satirist, be made into a typical specimen of the satiric art? Had Jules Laforgue (the author

of *Moralités Légendaires*) been an Englishman, this would have been a job for him. He could have turned Hamlet into a titanic farce. It is almost that as it stands. And I question if it should be left to the Soviet authorities to rehandle Lear and Coriolanus, for instance. It could be done far better here, where English is spoken, and where there would be much less danger of damage to the original.

Satire, some satire, does undoubtedly stand half-way between Tragedy and Comedy. It may be a hybrid of these two. Or it may be a *grinning* tragedy, as it were. Or, yet again, it may be a comedy full of dangerous electrical action, and shattered with outbursts of tears.

But we all recognize *laughter* as an anti-toxin of the first order. As a matter of fact *no* man (as I have hinted above)—any more than the shell-shocked man—should be laughed at. It is unfair, therefore it is " caddish," to laugh at *anybody :* we all, as much as the shell-shocked man, really could cry *cad*, or have cad cried at us, at any outburst of mirth at our expense. It is unnecessary to enumerate the tragic handicaps that our human condition involves : the glaring mechanical imperfections, the nervous tics, the prodigality of objectless movement—the, to other creatures, offensive smells, disagreeable moistures—the involuntary grimace —the lurch, roll, trot or stagger which we call our *walk*—it is only a matter of degree between us and the victim of locomotor-ataxy or St. Vitus's dance.

By making a great deal of noise ourselves we at least drown the alarming noise made by our neighbours. And the noise that, above all others, has been bestowed on us for this purpose is the bark which we describe as our *laugh*. I approve of a *barking man* myself—I find that I have less occasion, with his likes, to anticipate a really serious bite. So laughter is *per se* a healthy clatter—that is one of the first things to realize about it.

An illustration of this principle, in a parallel order of feeling, is furnished by Henry James, where he is discussing the virtue in a novelist of hard work, and the clatter and bustle which, as it were, accompanies it. Put *laughter* for *hard work*, and you will see what I mean, I think. These are the words of that great puppet-manufacturer :

" It is, as you say, because I ' grind out ' my men and women that I endure them. It is because I create them by the sweat of my brow that I venture to look them in the face. My *work* is my salvation. If this great army of puppets came forth at my simple bidding, then indeed I should die of their senseless clamour."

# NO GHOSTS

By WILLIAM PLOMER

MRS. DE PAUL-PINCUS'S visit to Quarenden Hall was short, but has not been forgotten. At the corner of a lane leading to Quarenden, a large maroon-coloured car slowed down, one afternoon last summer, in order to leave the main road. As it did so, the occupant glanced at the fingerpost and then told the chauffeur to go slowly as she wanted to have a good look at the country. A healthy, middle-aged woman, both fussy and determined, she was rather over-dressed in white with touches of black, and equipped with an Edwardian bust and one of those tiny little modern hats, pinched in at the top, so that she had at once an air of old-fashioned prosperity and of trying to keep up with the times. A bright young person in 1907—her memoirs and her earlier novels equally make it plain—Zélie de Paul-Pincus, far less exotic than her name, has gradually ripened into a fairly successful woman of the world without losing her youthful archness. Indeed, that archness has contributed to her success. Her face, carefully made up, is enlivened by a pair of quick but not penetrating eyes, now slightly discoloured. She looked that afternoon as if she might have been on her way to a garden-party, with the pearls rising and falling on the powdered triangle of pink skin at the base of her neck, and her expensive clothes and full contours suggesting the opulence of summer only slightly shadowed by the approach of autumn. She looked a little out of place, gliding in her shiny, dark-red limousine between the brambly hedges of a country lane. Sitting comfortably there in her comfortable car, she vibrated a little, like a jelly decorated with cream, as she glanced from side to side with a shallow, practised eye, looking for local colour.

The road was narrow, the landscape typically English, with its sumptuous elms, its green grass, its fields of corn more delicately green, its savour of hay and meadow-sweet, and the continuous trilling of larks overhead. The car went slowly up a long incline, between hedges so tall that they shut out the view, and Mrs. Pincus looked absently at the back of her chauffeur's head. She had a sudden feeling that he was almost a stranger to her. She treated her servants with what she conceived to be dignity, and this prevented her from learning much about them. Her sudden qualm was followed by no resolve to learn more.

Towards the top of the hill, the hedges sank and revealed an untidier landscape. From the top, there lay open to the view a broad, wooded valley with a stream winding through it on its way to join the distant Gloucestershire Ouse, and in the middle, held together like a bouquet by the ribbony stream, the trees and towers of Quarenden itself. Mrs. Pincus made her chauffeur stop for a moment, and as she gazed at the view, her eye

was not dreamy like the scene before her, but glinted like that of a hungry sparrow-hawk which catches an old but tender rabbit asleep and means to gobble it up at once.

Quarenden is an old and beautiful but not a very large house. Its chief interest is an increasingly rare one—it has been in the occupation of the same family since the early Middle Ages. " There have been Potts at Quarenden since time out of mind," Mrs. Pincus said to herself, resolving that when she came to " use " the " material " before her, she would substitute a more high-sounding name for that of Pott. She did not know the present Mr. Pott, and her visit to him was made possible by a paragraph in a local newspaper to the effect that Mr. Edmund Pott, following the example of other landowners, had kindly consented to allow certain portions of the grounds and Hall at Quarenden to be seen by the public on alternate Thursday afternoons throughout the summer for a fee of not less than a shilling per head, the proceeds to be given to the new county hospital. " The Hall, certainly entitled to rank as one of the less known of England's stately homes, has never before been opened to the public, and Mr. Pott is to be congratulated on his public-spirited decision, which will afford a welcome opportunity in these hectic days of visiting this venerable relic of Merrie England. Once an abbey, founded by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the Hall passed through some stirring scenes of historic pageantry in mediæval times. Queen Elizabeth is said to have passed a night under its roof. . . ."

Mrs. Pincus, in her car, began to glide down into the valley, and then to be jolted a little, for the surface of the lane was rough. On either side the hedges had grown tall and ragged, and fat blackbirds flapped noisily off when they saw the car approaching—they whistled shrilly, and left the bunches of elder-flowers shaking in the still, warm air. And then the car came to a stop, in a warm, country silence, smelling slightly but wholesomely of cow-dung, with bees buzzing about among the dead-nettles and cow-parsley.

" I suppose this must be the way, ma'am," said the chauffeur, looking rather doubtfully at an old five-barred gate which stood half-open under the hedge.

" I suppose it must be, Horsfall, though it seems incredible that this should be the only way to the Hall, this awful lane. Are you sure you came the right way ? "

" Yes, I came the way they told me," said Horsfall, " but we can't go no farther with the car."

" Well, I'm afraid I must walk. Will you open the gate ? There must be some mistake."

Unfolding a white sunshade, she began to make her way along a rough footpath across a meadow to the house, leaving Horsfall to drowse over a cigarette and a newspaper. She glanced anxiously at a distant and somnolent cow, and then began to compose a remark to make, if she got the chance, to Mr. Pott : " I'm looking for material for a historical story I'm thinking of

writing—but of course it's a secret ! " She could see ahead of her a low stone bridge over the shadowy stream : it led, seemingly, straight to some neat lawns and the house itself. She felt uneasy. Surely this couldn't be the right way ? Her assurance had not deserted her, but the summery silence seemed oppressive. She had expected to see a car-park and a throng of dressy visitors, and surely if one invited the public one didn't expect it to struggle over a meadow to the front door ? A little puzzled, she paused to wipe one of her shoes on a tussock of grass, for it had got sullied in the meadow. She could almost have cried—everything seemed to be going wrong.

She had hardly taken two steps on to the bridge when she was startled by the loud quacking of innumerable ducks. There they were, flotillas of them on the stream, regarding her with bright suspicious eyes and quacking with surprise, tinged, it almost seemed, with resentment and even malice. To right and left the quacking spread ; it was taken up by more and more ducks, which could be seen in the sunbeams under the willows and hawthorns, and away in the distance to right and left the panic spread, and a faint chorus of quack-quacking filled every pause in the louder protests near at hand. Had a fox appeared on the bridge the birds could hardly have made more fuss ; had they been mastiffs and watchdogs they could scarcely have startled her more. But with an air of determination she passed over into the garden.

There were the grey walls of Quarenden, seemingly all staring windows ; and here was a wide lawn with beds full of flowers ; but not a soul was in sight. Had nobody, then, in the whole countryside come to see the house and help the hospital ? She wondered if she should go straight up to the front door or if she should first approach the shabby grey-flannel backside of a stooping gardener which could be seen over there, just beyond the flower-beds. Yes, she would speak to him first. Getting nearer, she saw that a further expanse of lawn was almost entirely covered with duck-pens made of wire-netting, and that he was busying himself with the construction of yet another.

" Good afternoon," she said in the tone of voice she used when addressing servants.

The man, whose trousers were really extraordinarily shabby, jumped a little, for he had not heard her approaching across the grass. Then he straightened himself slowly, as a man does who is not as young as he has been, and confronted the stranger, holding out his arms at an angle from his body, for his hands were very dirty. He looked at her rather blankly for an instant, an oldish man with a white moustache and shrewd country wrinkles round a keen pair of eyes, and before he had time to reply to her greeting (for he had a country deliberateness) she said :

" Do you know if I can see the Hall ? "

" Well, there it is," said the man, nodding his head towards the house and smiling an odd smile which was at once benevolent, cynical and defensive. He waited for her to speak again, and she was a little taken aback. Was he really a gardener ?

" I read in the paper that one could see over the house," she explained, not without condescension.

" So one can, on certain days," said the man, smiling, " but this doesn't happen to be one of them, I'm afraid. I only show the house on every other Thursday, and this is one of the other Thursdays."

The truth being now clear to her, Mrs. Pincus, cursing inwardly, thawed with appropriate haste.

" Oh, I *am* sorry ! " she said. " How silly of me to make a mistake about the day ! "

" Well, as you're here," he said, twinkling, " I'll put a good face on it and show you the house. I expect you've come a long way. Only I warn you, I shall fine you a bit extra for the hospital as a punishment for coming on the wrong day. How do you like my ducks ? In those boxes over there, eggs are being hatched out, here we have the youngest ducklings with their mothers, those are a fortnight old, those a month, and so on, until they're quite emancipated."

" Dear little things ! " Mrs. Pincus said, gushingly.

" Paying little things," said Mr. Edmund Pott. " I shall have to go and wash my hands. Would you mind waiting for me in the hall ? You'll find the front door open, I think."

And he made off round a corner, while Mrs. Pincus, bridling with pleasure at the thought of a personally-conducted tour, of her luck at getting Mr. Pott to herself, sailed off into the shadow of the house. Her taste in interior decoration was merely fashionable, and when she found herself in the hall she was a little shocked. A high, plain room with a stone floor and windows far above one's head, it was crammed with an accumulation of centuries—especially of the last century. She felt that the antimacassars, the large bad Chinese vases stuffed with bulrushes and the photographs in elaborately carved Indian frames did not go very well with the old portraits and escutcheons.

" We sit in this room in the summer but not in the winter," said Mr. Pott, reappearing with clean hands. " This is the oldest part of the house——"

Unlike most guides to ancient monuments, he had developed two forms of monologue. When showing round large parties of visitors he stuck to facts and dates and two or three anecdotes ; when showing round a small party or a single visitor he made the process more human and was more conversational, and derived amusement from the way they took his sallies and the remarks they made themselves. But Mrs. Pincus somehow failed to call out his natural amiability. He took a dislike to her, and was in any case annoyed at being interrupted in his work.

" I think I must have come by the wrong road," she began.

" Oh, that doesn't matter ! You came across the field, I expect. There is another way, but it's not much better, except that there's no field. We don't bother much about the road—after all, there are so many good roads nowadays, it doesn't matter if you strike a bad one now and then. They

say that in the eighteenth century a man who lived here was making his way over a very muddy road when he saw a hat lying on the surface. He kicked it, and found it had a head inside. When they dug out the possessor of the head, they found he was on horseback. So really *we* can't grumble. . . . This is called the South Gallery."

On the right, pictures ; on the left, some pieces of sculpture after, but a long way after, Canova, mixed with cases of stuffed owls, and surmounted by trophies of arms from outlandish places.

" The young man in the blue coat is by Gainsborough."

Mrs. Pincus had little knowledge of painting, but Gainsborough, she knew, was Gainsborough, and confronting the homely-faced Pott in the pale blue coat, she murmured :

" Charming ! "

" He's usually thought very plain."

" As a painting, though——"

" Oh, it's all right as a painting," said Mr. Pott, walking rapidly into a large room with an ornate ceiling, a room that was very dusty and devoid of furniture, except for one table on which was the mouldy top of a christening-cake under a glass case.

" We don't use this room," he said, " but people look at the ceiling."

Mrs. Pincus looked at the ceiling.

" I never look at ceilings myself," said Mr. Pott. " They give me a stiff neck. Can't see the point of painted ceilings."

" I was going to say——"

" Please mind the step. This room was used to keep armour in when I was a boy. Armour—who wants armour ? There's not much in it now but tennis rackets and old boots, as you see. . . . Now we go this way."

" What a beautiful house you have," said Mrs. Pincus. " I'm thinking of——"

" Beautiful ? Well, it may be, but I'm used to it. Ramshackle, I call it. It's all right now, but it's the winter that tells. I'm not as young as I was."

" Of course, it's the *continuity* that's so wonderful ! " she exclaimed, wishing he would talk about his family.

" Look out of the window and you'll see the stream," he said. " It was once the moat. This used to be a bathroom. I used to fish out of the window. There aren't many men in England can say that they've caught fish from their bathroom window."

He was slipping into the public form of his monologue.

" No, indeed," she said, thinking that living away in this hole might have made him a bit touchy, and that he must be humoured.

" I must confess," she said, taking advantage of a pause, " that I have at the back of my mind—but of course it's a secret !—an idea about writing an historical novel, and when I came here to-day I was quite shamelessly keeping a weather-eye open for local colour. Do you think you'd mind your house being described, as I imagine it to have been in Elizabethan times, in a novel ? "

" Good God ! In a novel ? Afraid I never read them myself. Well, *I* can't stop you, can I ? Afraid I shall never read it, so I shan't know what it's all about, shall I ? Put me in, too, if you like. Old country fossil making a duck-run. *I* shall never know, shall I ? "

He led the way up some stairs.

" Now we're going on to the roof so that you can see the view."

They came out on to the roof. Part of it was flat. There were stone chimneys, and against one of them a garden seat, painted green. Leaning on a balustrade, they looked down on the lawns and flowers, they could see the glasshouses in the kitchen garden, and a sunlit bend of the stream all dotted with ducks, and there was a view of the only park-land remaining to Quarenden.

" What a heavenly afternoon ! " said Mrs. Pincus. " What an enchanting view ! How lovely to live in such a peaceful place in these difficult times ! "

A faint chorus of quacks came up from the distant ducks, as if in assent.

" Well, the times are just as difficult in peaceful places as they are anywhere else," said Mr. Pott. " A brother of one of the Regicides was drowned just at that bend in the stream. The Cromwellian troops were camped at the top of the slope. The siege lasted nearly two months. And there had already been a battle up there in the time of the Heptarchy. Fortunately, we aren't troubled by any ghosts."

" What, no ghosts ! " said Mrs. Pincus. " Oh, but you must have ! "

" Oh, but we haven't ! "

" Oh, fancy there being no ghosts ! " she said, with a disappointment half real and half feigned, and sat down on the seat.

" Lord, I should have warned you ! " cried Mr. Pott.

" Warned me ? " She smiled coyly up at him.

" The paint's wet."

She stood up as abruptly as if she had been stung.

" Your beautiful dress must be ruined. Turn round. Yes, if I may say so, I'm afraid we've given you rather more local colour than you bargained for. Oh dear, I *am* sorry."

The white seat of the dress was now barred with blotchy green stripes.

Mrs. Pincus's one consolation was that he had said, " your *beautiful* dress." She seized the chance of showing that she knew how to be gracious, and smiled, delighted that he should have put himself in the wrong.

" And I'm afraid there's nothing in the house that'll take it off," he was saying.

" I shan't pretend I'm pleased," she said, as they made their way downstairs, " but it was really my fault, wasn't it ? For being lazy. I was so entranced with your view and its associations that I felt I *had* to sit down and enjoy it for a few moments more."

" I'm exceedingly sorry," he said. " Will you come and write your name in the visitors' book ? "

She wrote her name, but he didn't even look at it. She had hoped he would say, although he didn't read novels, " Ah, Mrs. de Paul-Pincus !

Of course, I know your name very well." Then she noticed a collecting-box for the county hospital.

"I wasn't going to ask you for anything," he said, "after ruining your clothes like this."

"Oh, but you *must* take this," she said, opening her handbag and producing a ten-shilling note.

"We could almost endow a bed with that," he said. "We only get a bob as a rule."

"And I *did* come on the wrong day," she said, gathering up her gloves.

He showed her to the door but no farther. As she crossed the bridge, a mocking, valedictory chorus arose from those hateful ducks. Horsfall saw her approaching rapidly across the meadow, and guessed that she must be out of temper. She asked him abruptly for his *Daily Express*, and told him to spread it out on the seat. He could not guess why until he opened the door for her to get in.

"Home, Horsfall," she said, crossly, but as he took his place at the wheel he could not help smiling.

"That was how she looked," he afterwards told the cook, "like a green blooming zebra."

# MECHANIZATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

By R. H. MOTTRAM

I REMEMBER standing with a friend and brother-temporary-officer, on one of the noisiest days of 1918, to watch what we now know to have been a major battle of history, from the centre of which, thank God, we were removed by some thousands of yards, so that we could see all that there is to be seen of most modern battles. No orderly lines of men moving to personal conflict were visible. But we could see, and, above all, hear an altogether unparalleled quantity of machinery at work, using up a fantastic sum of energy, to volatilize an amount of material without precedent. The din was stupefying, and drowned ordinary speech, but we managed to communicate with each other and agree that something more abstract than a whole landscape was being shifted bodily before our eyes. That impression has returned, more especially since 1930, and the time has perhaps come when it can be examined to some purpose.

There can be little doubt that we were witnessing one of those crises in human existence when immensely increased facilities for change are suddenly lent to men, unprepared and perhaps fundamentally unfitted to control them. The old glib phrases about human nature never altering, and eternal things, if not belied, seem to our shocked senses to be so. For a long period the stream which we prefer to call that of progress runs smoothly enough to enable us to consider it calmly and to feel we direct its course. Inventions such as the railway and the telegraph commanded wonder and even respect. But they were confined by space and time to the lines along which they ran. The vast majority of English villages, for instance, are still out of sight and beyond the sound of the railway, and the telegraph has added but a thin wire or a rare post to their appearance, and has little visible effect on the lives of the vast majority of their inhabitants. But the thing that my friend and I were witnessing on that summer day sixteen years ago, was the mass employment of a principle that was new, or suddenly enlarged in scope, the principle of explosion or release of energy latent in so many substances. The employment of explosives in warfare was only the spectacular experiment that captured the attention of the inventor and his backers. The internal combustion engine and the radio are in the same category of the modes in which energy can be used, and road travel, air travel, and wireless transmission are the practical results which the urgencies of war have caused to be exploited with such subversive (whether fatal or blessed) ubiquity. This new outlet of mechanical power has certain limits. For the moving of heavy weights, the slow strong pressures of air, water, and steam cannot yet be superseded. But for all more manageable activities, above all for extending the range of the

carriage of the human body, the human voice and perhaps sight, the new sphere of manipulation is eminently adaptable.

It would not matter so much if the distinction between the matter and the spirit were as clear and insurmountable as the words we use for them. Road transport up to the time of my youth was limited in pace and distance to the powers of the horse (for the railway and steamboat and telegraph could only be used for numbers of people, between defined points, on account of their cumbrous structure). But members of the generation now growing up are going to be able individually to change climate and outlook, communicate ideas and displace matter on a scale hitherto undreamed of. I have heard travellers talk of the wonders of telepathy among primitive races. But will such faculties be remarkable or memorable to peoples that have television at their command ? Now this sudden speeding up of facilities is particularly interesting to the thoughtful Englishman (I use the word in its exact meaning) even if it goes no farther than we can see at the moment. Anatole France once used the phrase " La Vieille Angleterre." No word in our language can convey the depth of meaning the cynic philosopher of France could lend to such an expression. The instantly-registering consciousness of his race, the long history of the experiments of that remarkable people, gave him a view that none of us islanders can enjoy of the extraordinarily slow, semi-conscious, calm tempo of our own tradition. The same thing was expressed to me by a quick, keen, multi-lingual young German who, introduced to a very humble, mediocre, suburban abode, clapped his hands delightedly :

" An English home ! " he cried. Nothing in that home can have awakened his envy for its intelligence or its novelty. I think the quality he valued most was the sense of lingering Victorianism. Again, an American visitor, when asked what he preferred to eat or to do, in spite of the variety and serviceability he must surely have missed, cried out for :

" Your honest-to-God English . . . . " whatever it was.

It may astonish the inhabitant of London and of many of our big towns and watering-places to learn that, to the visitor from Chicago, The Hague and Leipzig, or Lodz, Lyons and Milan, we are not remarkable for the up-to-date nature of our industrial development or the amenities of our city life, as we are for the eighteenth-century methods of our agriculture, and the solidity of our residential country classes. After all, agriculture is still our largest industry numerically, and no other country in the world has preserved the Squire and the Parson as we have, yes, even in the twentieth century. I have seen southern Americans who looked like the former, and *curés* who might claim similarity with the latter. But these have been mere exceptions, whereas the type of ours has persisted for three hundred, and in some cases nearly eight hundred years. This is our distinguishing quality, and this is now perhaps for the first time seriously challenged. Our system (or lack of it erected almost into an anti-system) has survived so much. Can it survive the loud-speaker ? What, exactly, is it that we wish to survive ? Something vague, very hard to define, and appearing a very

different thing to English people of different degrees of purchasing power, the only real class distinction in England. We may exclude the remains of the old landed class, who have a long tradition of privilege, and have always spent the greater part of their lives in houses from the windows of which nothing but grass and trees can be seen. They are not numerous. At the other end of the scale we must exclude the very poor, I hope also not very numerous, but one still hears of slum children in London who have never seen grass or sea-sands. In between the two lies the immense bulk of the nation which can, if it will school itself to coherence, decide what appearance the "country" is to retain. I am told that 100,000 persons leave a town like Edinburgh, which holds something over 400,000 souls, every fine Sunday in summer, by bus alone. When we add to this the car-owning public, and its relatives and friends (none of whom go by bus if they can avoid it, we may be certain), those who use the trains, who hike, and above all who pedal cycles, the last two a recently grown and a resurrected class of week-ender, an incalculable but surely large number, we must wonder if nearly half the town-dwellers in the nation do not go out of town for many hours of one if not two days a week, when they want to. Edinburgh may be exceptional. Its access to the country is direct and easy, and the spending power of its wage-earning class relatively high. In London the proportion of week-enders may be smaller (though, if so, appearances are deceptive), earnings may average lower, access to the country be longer and more difficult. On the other hand Sheffield and Manchester and I don't know how many other northern and midland towns, and all large sea-coast ones, have cheap immediate access to fresh air that is not merely beyond the suburbs, but far beyond the cultivated zone of roads and hedgerows. Never, we may safely assert, has so large a proportion of a people acquired such a habit. And what are the listening-in, the reading, the conveniences of all these, but further variation of their conditions? Machinery created drudgery; machinery is now enforcing leisure, and is likely to enforce a good deal more. It will be surprising if we are not compelled to adopt a five-day working week before long. Machinery may prove indispensable to enable us to cope with such a situation. The necessity and desire for such undreamt-of amenities are the ultimate result of years of experiment in explosion.

I am not supposing merely an extension of the week-end habit to the two-thirds or one-half of the population which at present does not indulge in it, or only sporadically. Nor if I were dealing only with that, would it greatly alarm me. I do not believe it to be beyond the power of legislation to make us quiet, or beyond the power of propaganda to make us tidy, or beyond the power of both together, plus engineering, to make us safe. I am concerned with the vital impulse behind the phenomenon of week-ending, and cognate contemporary relaxation, its real motive and the likelihood of its realization.

It will astonish a good many theorists, I believe, to learn that we are fundamentally not a town-dwelling people. The accidental townward drift

of the nineteenth century was only a more slowly-consummated accident than the equally accidental habit that now half-empties our towns for a quarter of the week, and may soon more than half-empty them for a longer portion. According to some historians, the unemployed crowd in London originated in the landless poor displaced by the first enclosures, under the Tudors. But no such cause, or the more drastic eighteenth-century enclosures, will account for the displacement townward that has been going on up to and possibly after the War, though now partly obscured by the opposing tendency of outward-spreading public and private housing. The villagers of Norfolk have flocked into Norwich for higher wages, more freedom, and a better time.

The fact that they did so in conditions that largely nullified the advantages they were seeking has nothing to do with the position. The movement resulted not from any theory or serious consideration of the matter, but from a deep-rooted and very enlightened view of the use of time and money peculiar to England.

Democratic and advanced movements in this country are often a disappointment to their promoters from a lack of realization that Englishmen of the wage-earning classes are only class-conscious so far as it suits their interest. They are not content and proud to be what they are, as, in France, millions are proud and content to be peasants or *concierges* (a class equal in numbers to the whole English agricultural or mining population). On account of our particular line of development the Englishman finds it difficult to be land-conscious, and is necessarily ceasing to be job-conscious, as the craftsman is incessantly and inevitably replaced by the machine-tender. To him the country and the animals he associates with it, even though he keep them in his backyard, mean " sport," pleasure, relaxation, not work, not property. This is the brightest hope in our future. May we never have a large class working eighteen hours a day on the land at some job that could be done in a hundredth part of the time by pressing a lever, or a large class living in basements for the sake of the small advantages and perquisites that result from watching a stone staircase, all in order to scrape up a few coins or notes and hide them somewhere.

From somewhere very far back, I cannot say with certainty and I am not sure if anyone knows where, there has always been a very much better idea, now become national, of the uses of money. I wish I could reproduce a description I once heard given by a *chasseur-à-cheval* of his first contact with that extraordinary nation-amateurly-in-arms, the British Armies in France, that had filled up some departments of his country. He couldn't contemplate calmly the amount of money that passed through the hands of " ces messieurs " or the way they spent it. To-day we are witnessing the coincidence of aspiration and opportunity of those millions. For the first time, the country-minded sport-and-fresh-air-loving English townsman, of the wage-earning classes is going to be offered, and under the urge towards improved national health, he may be constrained to take, a much larger dose of the " country." What are we going to make of it ?

The first results of the extended use of the country are turmoil, noise, and litter. These undesirable symptoms are being dealt with and, I insist effectively. Something far more momentous is ahead. The outward urge of the less wealthy townsman is being met by the slow and sure breakdown of the old system of the countryside. Of all the things that make us desire to preserve, even if we alter, the life of the English village, the Church is the most obvious, and has not yet suffered much. In fact, it is usually better kept and more accessible than it used to be. But the village blacksmith has become the owner of a garage with a row of pumps, the village shop has become a store, the inn, which has descended to being a pub, is now in some cases being flattened into a teashop. And the Hall has been affected most of all. In many a parish it has been emptied, let, shorn of its farms and shooting, finally handed over to the house-breaker. It is a melancholy spectacle. Not the fieriest demagogue can point to a case in which this process is benefiting the poor at the expense of the rich. It would be far truer to say that it leaves the poor more helpless and the rich more remote. Those who, from being on the spot, had to take an interest in the village, wise or unwise (and there were both kinds) now live in a flat in London and take no interest at all. Property that was at least safe from the ribbon-builder, from bungaloid growth and exploitation, that made a wall of quiet green around the roads along which we used to walk or cycle, the waters along which we used to row, the heath and woodland where we used to picnic, are now subject to the rules of commerce as the most cursory journey through Surrey or Sussex, North Wales or the Lakes will show. And what may be seen to-day is only a beginning. To say this may sound little more than repeating truths already voiced by the National Trust for Places of Beauty and Interest, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and to a certain extent, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, as well as by local societies and individuals. But if it is repetition, it is not superfluous if it brings forcibly to our consciousness the fact that a large population is going, perhaps rapidly, back to that which we vaguely call the "country" but not to the conditions from which its ancestors came to the town. The new countryman cannot be kept back, even if we would. To do so means the abandonment of the whole of the present commercial system, which says that if someone has land available for building plots he can sell it, or accommodate it himself for anyone who can afford to come and live on it. To keep him back means scrapping the whole fabric of public-health-for-our-own-protection. He is a product of town life. He is largely a member of the latest phenomenon, the person whose leisure is an equal if not greater problem than his job. He is coming, not for an outing, but to live, now that the bus, cycle, electric cable, wireless and drainage have reversed the conditions from which he fled. He is a person, I will vouch for him, of sterling if vague integrity, to whom the decencies of civilized life are eminently suggestible.

The great quality he will lack for at least, we may suppose, a generation, is the solidity, the nature of a fixture, which his forbears used to have,

according to all writers from Fielding to Jeffries, which the modern countryman who has not shifted still has (*vide* Adrian Bell, A. G. Street, and that live little paper, the *Countryman*) and which he himself possessed, as such, when he was still a genuine townsman.

Pausing a moment over this last consideration, if we re-read Lucas's *Life of Lamb*, we may be simply astounded at the completely town type which used to exist. Lamb hated landscapes and lanes. He loved Holborn and the Strand, and liked Wardour Street better than the Lakes. But the man who is coming to live in the country is not like that. He comes from West Ham, or Hyde, or Gateshead. And even if he didn't, there is nothing so stereotyped in our town life as in other countries. The English city has never consolidated itself with boulevards and whole quarters of flats. The man who is coming to live in the country has, in sentiment, never left it. He has clung surprisingly to his bit o' garden (the size of a handkerchief), his dog, his cat, his pigeon, his canary. His appetite for allotments astonishes those who have had to try to satisfy it. Given these premises, what help and guidance does he require, in fact what have we to offer him ?

This question is asked with all respect to the solution which may be found to the existing contest between the rival principles of compulsion and persuasion. If the former wins, we need not bother. But if the latter, and many of us in England still hope for and expect it, what are we going to suggest ?

It is, of course, very premature to make any concrete decision. I will make bold, however, to set down the following facts.

If the agricultural and " accommodation " land within an increasingly wide radius of towns is going to be built on, it will be better done by the present owners, especially if they are going to stay in the neighbourhood. I have no idea how near " sporting rights " can suffer building to come to them, and survive. But well-planned building might be the more valuable. What sort of building ? Not, preferably, that which is so meanly planned and executed that its inhabitants will stray far to get away from it, and its children will care nothing for their own behaviour or anyone else's. It might be worth while to see that they had reason to care for the place they live in, and found at least occupation in it, for leisure, if not for their living.

The experience of town-planning has, I believe, canonized the allocation of twelve houses to the acre. I would not dream of questioning it. I would only say that from personal experience I know that a family of four persons can produce in their spare time all the green vegetables and fruit they can eat, on half an acre of land on which their house stands. It might keep them busy, provide them with exercise, with some sort of pride in the place and desire to keep it decent. It might damage local trade. That will have to be faced. There may be parts of England, or, at least, South Wales, where the land is not amenable to such an arrangement. But I think generally it must be anywhere between Plymouth and Edinburgh. If such a device could be employed by some owner interested in local conditions, he would be able to command bus routes, cinemas, petrol stations and such

other potential sources of good or ill as will certainly be called into existence. He might be pounds into pocket by non-depreciation of the property he retains, and become quite swollen with pride if he took upon himself the provision of their wireless aerials. Go for a ride on the L.N.E.R. through Bethnal Green and see what I mean. Best of all, there might be avoided that saddest aspect of the often good and always well-meant public housing-scheme. The poor used to live, wretchedly enough, but next the rich. Comparison and influence were unavoidable. But in so many newly-built areas, the machine-tender lives amid a whole townscape of his own sort.

But of course I am wrong. We shall, we must have a compromise, a muddle. We must all do as we like so entirely that none of us gets what he wants. We want more wars and fewer efforts at imagining what our neighbours are thinking about. Let us all manufacture so many goods that no one can pay for them and they will have to be given away, thrown away, all over the countryside. War is best, though. The next war will solve Mechanization and the Countryside fully and finally.

Sir Stafford Cripps

TWO DICTATORS: BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

Sir Oswald Mosley

TWO DICTATORS: BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

# IN THE NIGHT

By GEORGE FORBES

HE fingered his tooth and gazed into the looking-glass ; in the room there was an odour of paraffin which he had been rubbing into his hair to cure the incipient baldness. What is wrong with me, he thought, my teeth are all bad and the only part of my hair that grows now is the fringe. He peered closer to look at the ragged fringe. What can be wrong with me, he muttered. Outside, the yellow lights were guttering in the rainy streets. He looked at them dully and at the murky river beyond. They were bearable anyway in the darkness, but in daylight he could not stand it. The yellow, guttering street lamps and the slimy, suicidal river. Yes, suicidal, he always felt like that when he looked at the great ocean of dirty water which is the Thames. And the noises . . . he could sleep through them anyway in the backroom.

For the last three years he had done no work at all. Just lazed through the streets by night-time and thought about this and that, mostly about his life when he was younger. Nothing had ever happened to him as it had to other young men. Nothing, nothing at all. He could remember whole years of gloom and wandering always alone through dark, dismal streets thinking about life, religion and everything that other people thought about. His brother had seen him from a bus one day, got off and tapped him on the shoulder and remarked : How lonely you look, you always look so alone in the streets. And he had smiled, not thinking anything about it, but often it had come back. Why alone, why was he always alone ? Why did nobody ever ask to see him again ? What was wrong with him ? Why, why . . . There never had been any answer and this was one of the constant, vague, tormenting riddles which ran through his brain like a rat through a cold, empty sewer.

He was lying on his back smoking, as he usually did on Sunday mornings, listening to the pealing of the church bells. They would all be going to church, he thought bitterly. He was unshaven and greasy. A sudden blare of circus music struck his ears. It was the Salvation Army. They were all in the streets sucking in God's fresh air and enjoying themselves. Religion, everything that men did was some form of enjoyment. Was lying in bed then a source of enjoyment, he quizzed. No, it was the prelude to the grave, an anticipation of the complete inaction of death. Laughter came to his ears on this Sabbath morning, laughter making him look up involuntarily at the cobwebs and the damp, grimy ceiling and the four dingy walls of his prison. The sticky smell of beer was in his mouth and his stomach felt sour. Beer, he thought, always makes my stomach sour. He remembered listlessly how his uncle smelt on Sunday mornings of beer and sweat. And suddenly he saw a bright Sunday morning ; he was lying

beside his uncle in the little garret at home at his grandmother's and had just been awakened by voices, women's voices. There were three Irish fishergirls in the room at the bedside, and they were laughing and joking with his uncle, who was only about nineteen. He understood some of the allusions and the smells and the young women's faces and the gulls crying outside the windows and the clean, salt sea . . . aye, he had been young then. The blinds were drawn and he got up in his dressing-gown, which resembled a disreputable horse-cloth, strolled to the window, drew back the curtain for an inch and peeped out. He went back to bed and was soon in the midst of a vague, uneasy dream.

There was a drizzly rain on the river that night as he walked along the embankment. Policemen started for an instant out of the gloom and a moment afterward had melted into the rain once more. He walked aimlessly, communing with himself, without a purpose. His feet fell on the hard stones with the same unfailing regularity and insistence as the pitter-patter of the raindrops. The gutters ran over making strange little gurgling noises like new-born infants when they see a bottle of milk for the first time. At the sides of the pavement a woman would occasionally start out, come close up to him and peer into his face as if looking for someone, then seeing he was not the one they slithered silently back into the night. How many, how many, he wheezed, as he moved slowly on. He had no purpose in life, they had, he shuddered. Was that a purpose or was it better to die? No, to sleep, to lie in bed was better than to die. He shuddered and glanced at the swirling river beneath and at the dim, heavy barges of rotten wood. To become like the barges, lifeless, rotten, worms. Oh, anything, sleep, sour breath every Sunday morning, emptiness, anything was better than worms and death.

A woman came straight out of the darkness and spoke to him in a foreign tongue. German, he looked at her blindly. She spoke sharply, she had come out sharply and had not slithered silently like a crocodile as the others had done and silently disappeared. She was sharp and clear-cut against the black canopy of the night. She did not look into his face, but spoke vehemently; she was asking the way to Streatham. He collected himself and remembered that there were women, that they were not all on the Embankment for a certain purpose. Dear me, yes, he thought, how theoretical I am becoming, my mother and my dear old sainted grandmother. The idea of them or his respectably married sisters, all married and in India, on the black embankment at the dead of night, seeking, peering . . . oh no, he collected his scattered thoughts, for the woman was still waiting, looking away past him at the masts of the barges. Streatham, let me see, let me see. He seemed to remember the name, but it was in Scotland, was it not ? Streatham.

Yes, where was Streatham, he asked himself, and then he happened to glance at his interrogator. She was looking earnestly, too earnestly at the river and the distant barges. From much reflection and little experience he understood that rapt, stiff, earnest glancing into the darkness away from the

other darkness. How did he know it, he asked himself in perplexity. How do we know anything ? But—sudden doubt assailed the fortress of logic—logical theory, he reflected—what proof have I, has anyone, she is beautiful ? He glanced at the cold, foreign face and the blonde hair. She is weeping, he mused, yes, surely she is weeping, and his heart became hard. Weeping, the embankment, rouged cheeks, the night. But why did she speak of Streatham . . . and Streatham was his birthplace, was it not, his birthplace. Did she know that, no, her English was too bad. Still, it was funny, Streatham the place where he was born. Strange whispers came to him through the night, the night which is forever timeless. Undisturbed by the manifold banality of human existence and life and tiresome human event the night is timeless and knows neither light nor space. A shiver of cold ran through his body. He was warmly clad and fearful of draughts, as are all melancholists, but he chilled at the sudden coming of autumn. Or was it fear. Of this woman with the foreign face and the blonde hair. Or the magical stain of woman's tears. Streatham, he murmured, his mind seemed to be nailed to Streatham . . . why Streatham, God knows why. . . .

Fraülein, he spoke in the stiff, old High German he had imbibed in the bleak university some time long, long ago. Gnädiges Fraülein. Streatham is yonder, and he pointed vaguely into the darkness. She started and looked at him. Streatham is over there, I used to live there, sudden anger possessed him, looking at that appealing face, Streatham I know it well number 16 bus from Victoria Embankment, I will show you, I will go with you. She drifted mechanically like the barges beneath swayed by the London tide. I used to live there, my mother, my God, a cruel woman, that is why . . . I am old now, he said furiously, forty-five, what would you say, don't you think ? Would you like a beer, the pubs are closed though, but the night clubs, and he rambled into the mazes of his mythical knowledge of dark things, wild life, night clubs, London by night, seamy sides, and she trudged on at his side and did not say a word. Something about the woman at his side was unloosening the stemmed torrents of speech, stemmed for many long years. He marvelled at his own loquacity, at the marvellously indecent loquacity of his innuendo with a woman he did not know and did not want to know. He did not want to know her, did not . . . enough, enough, the embankment, rouge on her lips, rouge on her cheeks, was that not enough, yes, but why did he want to show her Streatham, want to go on speaking to her for ever. . . He would like to show her some of the women he had met, he had known, never did he ever want to meet a woman again, money, they all wanted money, she made a movement as if in defence, he stamped his stick in nervous energy, vehemently, yes, money, money . . . he cocked his head in astonishment and seemed to be listening to something for the first time. They stopped beneath Big Ben and she asked him, Wasser, wo kann ich etwas Wasser bekommen ? Water, eh, nobody drinks water here, there is a coffee stall over yonder but the cups are always dirty, do you understand, gemeine Leute, sehr gemein. Yes, they are dirty people in London.

Next morning he got up and shaved himself and said, God bless her, and the tears filled his eyes. God bless her. He suddenly remembered her, very dimly saw her tear-stained eyes, he remembered her. What was it, long ago, very long ago. . . Somehow he was happier. He had seen her, he did not desire her. For others, yes, let it be, he had no desires. She awakened some lamp in the long unconsciousness of his mind. He would forget her. She would grow old, she would grow ugly, no tears, no more tears, oh no, oh God, no, she would not grow old. . . . He slit his lip with the razor and it bled profusely. She will not grow old, she will not. . . .

A few days later the cleaner knocked at the door and there was no response. She got a key and entered. He was lying in bed, muttering incoherently to himself. She is gone, he babbled, and she felt sick at the sound of his silly voice. Gone, but she cannot take away what she has left me ; she left her beauty, my God, what eyes, what hair, her mouth, she will grow old and hideous. Vague, far-off things glimmered in his blue eyes. Even the cleaner noticed he had blue eyes. She has gone, I shall never see her any more, oh, my God, what a fool I am, but her face I shall always remember her face, her eyes, her tears. . . .

# THE ART AND PRACTICE OF REVIEWING

By FRANK SWINNERTON

EXCEPT for popular novelists, who, as is well known, are all literary prostitutes and beyond defence, no persons are more generally execrated by men and women of taste than reviewers. These creatures have no standards; they discover masterpieces by the hundred; they are corrupt, stupid, and inferior to all previous reviewers. I have read this very day the regretful decision of a leading publisher that one cause of the decay of publishing is "the decline, especially marked during the last few years, in the quality of newspaper reviewing."

I do not agree that reviewing has declined in quality. It has declined in authority. Having in my day read very large numbers of old publishers' lists, and having seen the applause quoted in them from leading journals of the 'nineties and onwards on behalf of justly forgotten books, I think that reviewing has always been less than excellent. But I cordially agree that most reviewers, new and old, have no standards of judgment. Very few people have any standards of judgment. Many of them are at the mercy of fashion; and whether that fashion is for genteel foulness or for saleable slop it is still fashion. In Bloomsbury the personal fashion is for chalk-white faces, plastered hair, and great earrings; in smarter districts for scarlet lips, cock-eyed hats, and mahogany fingernails. Reviewers, pleased only by books which nobody but themselves can read, are as unsatisfactory as reviewers who extol the vulgar. Both are responding to a certain notion of chic.

However, that is my own idea of badness; it is not the complaint made by the majority. The majority believe that reviewers habitually praise inferior books, and that good books languish. They also assert that there is no existing periodical upon which they, as laymen, can rely for expert opinion. We all hope, I am sure, that THE LONDON MERCURY will solve at least that problem; but it is true that there is no paper at present with any pretensions to authority. I doubt if there ever has been a paper of merit enough to deserve perfect respect. We believe there has been; we look back at the grave, reputable past of *The Spectator* and *The Athenæum* and so on; but as we boast of it we are speaking wildly. Those papers had great influence in the nineteenth century; but they were written for a small, inelastic, and respectful public. Times have changed, and respect is more hardly earned. I think some of the reviews in *The Times Literary Supplement* to-day are probably as good as any that appeared in the age when Watts-Dunton was considered a major critic. As for the praise of inferior books, that has been going on since reviews were first written. It is an old reproach, a side alley in the great ever-renewable controversy of ancients and moderns.

When we speak of standards, what do we mean? We perhaps have a fleeting vision of reviews as they might be written by Walter Pater or Matthew Arnold. We wonder what these men would have made of the furious activity of modern authors. We believe they would have been fairly severe; allowing nothing to pass but what was absolutely first rate. Well, perhaps that might have been so with Matthew Arnold, who decidedly prefers what he calls "principles and connexions which are all in all to us," and who thinks criticism is "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." But Arnold was an educationalist; and it is not the wish of most of us that reviews should be exclusively educational. Moreover, Pater declared that "what is important is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects. He will remember always that beauty exists in many forms. To him all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal."

That last sentence, if we apply it generously to the literary scene of to-day, would seem almost to justify the enthusiastic reviewer who praises all books as if they were the same; but it does not do so. It expresses a view which Mr. T. S. Eliot would describe as "rotten with Liberalism"; but in a reviewer some liberality is perhaps not altogether a defect. In a critic, too, some acceptance of the fact that there are differences of opinion is a sign of wisdom. We cannot all write alike, and since one of the great complaints against modern civilization is that it tends to standardize everything a persistence in variety is less vicious than commendable. Besides, both Arnold and Pater name Sainte-Beuve as a first-class critic—I do not know whether Mr. Eliot would do so—and Sainte-Beuve over and over again says in effect what he sums up in a few words of the essay on Mademoiselle de Lespinasse: "The critic should have no partiality, and should take no side."

Sainte-Beuve's idea was that the critic should be an explorer, an assayer. He was interested precisely in those "facts" which Mr. Eliot thinks are so much more important than the interpretation of them. He had great curiosity, and a natural gift for reaching and sorting facts without prejudice. And, unlike either Pater or Arnold, he wrote regularly for the newspapers about current literature. He has thus some affinity (the advantages are all on his side) with the so-called star-reviewer of the moment-before-last in Londonjournalism. He had not to be "news," and it is to be presumed that he had time to read the books he wrote about; but he was a reviewer as well as a critic, a critic as well as a reviewer. If only, you say, we now had a Sainte-Beuve!

If we had a Sainte-Beuve, he would assuredly be overworked. He would be called upon to read this book and that at top speed, to write about it while the presses waited, and while other books accumulated upon his table. He would have to turn, not in the old leisurely way from one memoir to another, from Mazarin to Stendhal, and from Chateaubriand

to Madame de Sévigné, but from Hugh Walpole to Professor Trevelyan, from Dean Inge to P. G. Wodehouse, from the Esher Papers to an anthology of modernist verse. He might lose his nerve. How would he, how could he, find any common standard by which all these books could be judged? Would he find them, in their types and schools of taste, as Pater's critic might be expected to do, all equal?

That is just where the problem of reviewing becomes acute. I shall say no more about the haste with which books are nowadays dealt with in the newspapers; that is all a part of the fever of advertising. And nothing more about their multiplicity. What interests me, and what, I am sure, interests most other people who care at all for the subject, is the ground to be taken by any reviewer who has to be something other than a specialist. Is he to say that only certain types of books are worthy of praise; or is he to say that many types of books are entitled to praise, but that particular examples of those types are faulty? If the latter, and I think the latter is the true course for the reviewer, by what measure is he to work? Is he to say: this is a long biography, and long biographies are out of date; therefore this long biography is tedious? Is he to say: this history is written with the object of exculpating some person hitherto reputed a tyrant, or of telling how the poor people lived, whereas it has always been the habit of historians to take a different line, and therefore this history, being tendencious, is no good? Is he to say: this poetry is not like Milton's and is not as good as Shakespeare's; therefore it is vile and eccentric? Or is he to say: this is modern, and so excellent; biased, and so a social criticism; long, and so a relief from the recent snip-snap biographical sketch?

I think he should do none of these things. I think he should present himself to any book with an open mind, and that he should judge each book on its own merits: does this book fulfil the author's plan? Has it style; that peculiar suggestiveness of knowledge and understanding in reserve which we can call "quality" or "texture," originality of talent and thought? That, in fact, he should first of all be receptive to the book as it is. He has a duty to the author: that is very important. Too often the reviewer thinks only of his duty to himself or to his editor or to his clique or to the public. His earliest duty is to the author. If he fails in that duty he fails altogether, for he is not doing justice to the book.

But receptivity does not imply the abdication of judgment; merely its reservation. It means that whereas the dab critic opens a book, sees a misprint, and writes insultingly of the mind of any writer who allows a misprint to escape him, the true critic sees all, but permits himself no mental comment until he is at the end of the book and can set misprints and inaccuracies of other kinds in their proper proportion. Proportion is the critic's need. And then, what? Surely he should beware of judging a book for what it has not tried to be? He should not say: Jane Austen was a great novelist; Dumas writes differently; therefore Dumas is a lesser novelist. Or *vice versa*. Recently a London newspaper courteously sent me

a cutting of a review of a book of my own. The review began by praising a book by another author, and passed to me ; the reviewer said that as he was still full of admiration for the other author, whose method was very quick and keen, he could not properly appreciate my book, which was in a different *genre*. I sympathized with the critic ; for I should agree with him. But I could not help feeling that as I had not been trying to write in the same manner as the other author (for whom I have the greatest possible admiration) some irrelevance had entered the critic's mind. If you were to read a book by Defoe on top of a book by Mr. Kipling, you might feel that Defoe was on the side of particularity. On the other hand, if you read Mr. Kipling after Defoe you might find him a little slick. Neither view would be good criticism. I think that is a point which a reviewer should bear in mind ; that Macaulay is not necessarily a bad writer because he does not write like Ruskin, nor Ruskin a bad writer because he does not write like Bacon. All wrote essays. Far too many clever reviewers will take the line that a novel is no good because it is not as long as *War and Peace*, or because it is not written as Proust might have written it, or because it is not a political criticism after the manner of modern Communist authors. The point is not whether a book is like something else, but whether it succeeds in standing upon its own feet.

The one test which it seems to me can be applied to any book is whether it is a book. And by a book I mean a work original and peculiar to the author, not by design (for calculated originality is a contradiction in terms), but in fact. By originality I mean not eccentricity or lurid inventiveness, but the natural expression of the author's personal view of life. In much modern work there is great technical ingenuity but no originality ; it is a very difficult thing, I find, to be sincere, and the more self-conscious one is the more one is apt to mistake performance for creation.

A comparison of authors is useful as a check : is J. better than G. ? But it has no critical significance, for J. and G. are at different work. Also, the test of originality is only usable when the critic is very experienced indeed in all varieties of writing. Any living writer whose writing shows ten per cent. of originality is a good writer ; twenty per cent. means genius. I give Shakespeare about sixty-five per cent. ; Jane Austen thirty-five ; most contemporaries a minus figure. But percentages do not matter. If you accept traditional estimates of all the dead writers you have not read, you may undervalue living writers : on the other hand, many who extol living writers have no acquaintance with the dead, and mark them down as junk, which is a mistake. No man who is not very well read in old and new can be a serious critic, although he may entertain us well enough : certainly no man who over-values novelty can be a good critic. Novelty has nothing at all to do with originality ; it is the conventional twisted in an unconventional way.

Unfortunately literature is understood nowadays to be confined to the Greeks and the post-war young: whatever is neither Greek nor modernist has a thin time from the clever. To balance this, there is a middle generation

which pays lip service to the Greeks and despises (or at any rate condemns) the young. You can see the former set functioning in the more pretentious periodicals, and the latter everywhere else. Both classes suppose themselves to have standards; but they have none. They are all purely emotional in response to any idea, and dress their emotional response in suitably didactic language. From this arises a great appearance of critical severity, but nobody is any the wiser for it.

Nobody is any the wiser because by some instinct we are all prevented from reading whatever we disagree with. A Douglasite friend of mine to whom I gave a copy of Durbin's book on under-consumption theories confessed to me that he was unable to read it because any criticism of Major Douglas made him blindly angry. In the same way we all feel our eyes—or our minds—floating away from unwelcome criticism of our own work or work that we admire or work that we dislike; and we can learn from none of it. It may be that the general public similarly responds to criticism of all books whatsoever. Yet the critic has a clear duty to the public which he should never forget. What the public really wants to know in this particular department of letters more than anything else is what kind of book has been written. Hence so much of the clumsy book-reporting that is printed in review form. The perfunctory reviewer sets out what he can gather of the book's plan by means of a hasty glance; and he then adds: "Mr. Jones has surpassed himself," or "Mr. Jones would do well to attempt a more (or less) ambitious theme in future," or "This is the sort of dope Mr. Jones's readers expect of him," or "Profound, masterly, etc." But what the bad reviewer of this kind does badly is in aim what any reader needs of him. The reviewer, that is, stands in the place of a supposed reader. The reader has not read the book, and cannot comprehend any comment upon it unless he knows what kind of book it is. The words: "Murder in a library at midnight; twenty false clues; Jasper Sleuth unearths the villain" are quite sufficient for that sort of book, which is easily reviewed in brief. But for a more intricate book some more subtle attempt must be made to indicate character and execution. It is due to the author, and it is due to the public which is going to read the review and which must see what it is that the reviewer bases his praise or blame upon, or why he is lukewarm. As to the reviewer, it is his duty to himself, for his review should be self-justifying.

It is in the reviewer's duty to himself that we find the point most misunderstood by reviewers. The reviewer, if he is to sign, feels that he must air himself. He thinks, "It's *my* opinion that matters." It is not, at all. Nobody but himself cares what he thinks. The author does not care: all he wants to know (unless he is a mercenary author, without bowels) is whether his book has been understood. The public does not care: all it wants to know is what the book is about, and whether it is worth reading. If the reviewer satisfies the author that he has read the book and understood it and realized why the author wrote that book in that way rather than another book in another way, the author will endure any adverse

comment with calm. If the reader is satisfied that the reviewer knows what he is talking about, that he has read the book, and that he is doing it justice, he may not notice the reviewer's name but he will be influenced by the reviewer's judgment. The clever reviewers who show off would be surprised if they knew how little admiration they arouse.

And yet there is that difficult question of the personal reaction to any book—the imperfection of the instrument. I must confess that I am crammed with prejudices, and I think most reviewers must be the same. Guard sufficiently against those prejudices, and you may become unreadable : you may be dull, safe, non-committal, useless. Let them rip, and you will destroy yourself. You may pretend that you are a guardian of taste, and that all this imposture has to be unmasked, and that you are working in the interest of great literature ; but that is self-deception. If you had any active concern with great literature, you would not be writing reviews. You would be trying to create more great literature. That is the reply to reviewers who pride themselves upon iconoclasm : they are not critics by temperament. The critic by temperament never slays : the world comes to him to be passed in review. His business is to perform the juggling feat of submitting himself to the world, allowing it every word it demands, delivering judgment, explaining that judgment, and at the same time retaining his own personality intact.

That is not the actual practice. A reviewer takes a bundle of books, chooses half a dozen of them, looks at the publisher's name, the author's name, remembers all he has ever heard of the author, grimaces—" damned dull fellow," " pusher," " oh, golly "—marches off to sample the books, turns a page or two, reads, skips, skims, reads, reads deeply, throws the book down, picks up one of the others, a third, returns to the first, remembers that if he slates the first he cannot slate all the others, or that after consideration this book, although he dislikes it, is much better than any of the others, sits down to the typewriter. . . . " Mr. Smithkin, in his new novel " or " Mr. Swaffle, in his new biography of Lamb's friend, George Dyer " . . .

" Much better than any of the others." Did you notice those words ? They are what a celebrated publisher used to call " crucical." They represent the whole secret of our dissatisfaction with current reviewing. The reviewer is forever handicapped by knowledge that he is dealing with perishable goods. If he looks at books which are to be published next week, as he would look at books long loved, he would wish to say only that they are books of a certain order. But he knows that these new books will probably last, at best, three months. Then they will be dead, except for readers in village libraries who do not know whether a book is old or new. If he is a good reviewer, he will nevertheless submit himself to each and perform the extraordinarily difficult task of judging it ; but if he is just a reviewer, he will say to himself, " This is better than the others " or " This is better than I expected," and not " Is this the book we're all waiting for ? Is this a good book ? " He starts at zero. He is deeply pessimistic about modern

literature. There is too much of it. No wonder his standards, if he has any, are low.

Possibly my suggestion, of the test of originality, is an impossible one for the professional reviewer. He will go on praising what he likes or what he thinks he ought to praise because it is new or popular or unpopular, and blaming whatever he cannot read with any pleasure or pride. I am quite sure he is rarely consciously corrupt. He is overworked, it may be; and many people are stupid. But I am equally sure that those who have a fixed standard by which to judge any book that comes to them are useless as reviewers. They are the bigots. They cannot read the books they dislike, and certainly cannot understand them. As for the books they like, they like them because they are produced by men and women of similar bigotry to themselves; so that while persuading themselves of the possession of critical principles they are in fact committing propaganda, which in criticism, according to my notion, is the unforgivable sin.

# NEW LITERATURE

## LIVING HISTORY

By SIR EDWARD GRIGG

WAR MEMOIRS OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. Vol. III. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 21*s*.

THIS third volume of Mr. Lloyd George's *War Memoirs*, the seven hundred pages of which I have just read from end to end with breathless interest, has filled me with both admiration and astonishment. Let me first explain the astonishment. I was aware before I read it that Germany's unlimited submarine campaign constituted the gravest of the war problems with which this country had to deal in the central period of the long struggle. But I had no conception, until I read these carefully tabulated facts and figures, of how nearly it brought this country to its knees and the whole cause of the Allies to irreparable disaster. Nor had I any idea of the pessimism regarding it which had gathered strength in Whitehall during 1916 and had reached the stage of blank despair, particularly in the Admiralty and the Board of Trade, when Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister. Nor, finally, would I have believed, but for the incontestable documentary evidence here furnished, that the principal measures which ultimately overcame it could possibly have met with all the obstinate opposition and *sabotage* which they did in fact encounter. Mr. Lloyd George establishes beyond cavil the truth of his own judgment—" The greatest Allied triumph of 1917 was the gradual beating off of the submarine attack. This was the real decision of the war." The amazing thing is that the measures necessary to this achievement should have been overlooked so long; that even in 1917 they should have been so perilously delayed by the narrow vision and dogged prejudice of the seniors in great Departments; and that despite these really mountainous obstacles of our own making they were in fact taken before disaster overwhelmed us.

I have long myself regarded Mr. Lloyd George as a man of action who will stand second to none in the great roll of British statesmanship; but I have always felt that at least a strong minority of his contemporaries could not be expected to accept that estimate. He has throughout his life been a violently controversial figure. Like all men of genius, he provokes extreme judgments. Some can see nothing but his faults, while others can see nothing but his virtues. He has always laid about him with relish. He accords no more consideration to his opponents' feelings than he expects for his own. As a fighter he has primitive tribal instincts, and nothing as a rule attracts him more than " to drink delight of battle with his peers." But this volume is a remarkable exception. He must have read the proofs of it with wonder at his own moderation. Not that he cloaks his judgment or husbands criticism; far from it. His commentaries are often pungent, his sketches of personalities incisive and outspoken. But I observe in them a new and unfamiliar note. These are the accents of Jupiter rather than of Mars, of the elder statesman rather than the warrior. They are agreeably and unassumingly Olympian; their author seems to make his criticisms because he

feels he must, not (in his old way) because they give him unfeigned and unregenerate pleasure. And every one of them is documented. The most striking thing about the workmanship of this book is indeed its careful and conscientious documentation. In that respect it is a monument of industry, and I do not see how Mr. Lloyd George's most inveterate critics are to make head against this Rhadamanthine marshalling of written contemporary evidence.

What, for instance, is my friend Mr. Buchan to say in defence of what he wrote in his *History of the War* about Mr. Lloyd George and the Nivelle offensive ? " The only value which these pages may possess for the future historian of war," writes Mr. Lloyd George in his preface, " will depend upon the memories being genuine and upon the extent to which they are fortified by documentary or other contemporary evidence." It is the wide range of the latter displayed in this book which commands my astonishment ; and my admiration for the achievement here recorded has deepened with my astonishment. As material for history the book is of the very first rank, and it is much more, for it is also marvellously vivid and packed both with human nature and deep insight into human nature. For the central figure in a critical chapter of Britain's history to have written thus both of himself and of his contemporaries is a bold challenge to the judgment of posterity ; but I do not think that Mr. Lloyd George need fear the ultimate verdict, when all the voices of his time have said their say and passed into silence.

No full account of the book is possible in a review of this character ; but I must at least indicate its principal features. The first is the political problem presented by the formation of the Government. Mr. Lloyd George was entrusted with that duty by the King on December 7th. He had to secure adequate support from Conservatives, Liberals and Labour. All were disinclined at the outset, and all made difficulties. The task was nevertheless complete by December 9th—a remarkable achievement, so precarious in its beginnings that many predicted for the new Ministry a short and embarrassed existence. It was one of Mr. Lloyd George's least appreciated difficulties that the weaknesses of a coalition beset throughout this year not merely the Allied councils but the domestic life of his own Government ; and the record of those difficulties is full of instruction. Having formed the Government, he established in the same act the War Cabinet and the Cabinet Secretariat, and thereby created an entirely new system of executive control which immediately proved its value. No sooner were the new Government and War Cabinet in being than they had to deal with the German and Wilson Peace Notes of that winter. In the face of what his advisers said about the submarine menace, the Prime Minister's attitude to these called for signal courage ; but it was soon justified by the Bernstorff Note to the American Government.

There follow no less than 250 pages on the submarine menace, the problem of transport, and the food supply. I must repeat that I have never before appreciated either the imminent and mortal character of the peril in which we stood for at least six months in 1917, nor the extraordinary ramifications of the transport problem.

Fast on the creation of the new executive there followed the establishment of five new departments, the two most important of which, Shipping and Food, were entrusted to business men without political experience, Lord Maclay and Lord Devonport. Mr. Lloyd George's tributes to these two men and to most of the other Controllers whom he found it necessary to appoint are warm and unstinted. There follow nearly two hundred pages on the Rome Conference, the Nivelle offensive and

its sequel, and the ensuing military problem. It is news to me to learn that Marshal Pétain with two other leading French soldiers ultimately supported Mr. Lloyd George's advocacy of an offensive on the Italian front rather than in France and Flanders. I also learnt here for the first time that General Smuts supported the Flanders offensive of 1917 which attentuated our army with such calamitous consequences. These are intensely vivid chapters, and there is nothing better in them than the analysis of the motives which told against the plan of an offensive in Italy. Here is the weakness of alliances writ in letters of fire. Fortunately for us exactly similar motives took Falkenhayn to Verdun instead of to the Trentino; and when the Germans corrected their mistake by the offensive of Caporetto, we had sufficiently corrected ours to prevent that stroke from being decisive. The book ends with two most arresting chapters on the Petrograd Conference and the Russian Revolution and a final chapter on America's entry into the war. Nothing in my humble opinion so strikingly illustrates the narrowness of our main strategical conception as our action in concentrating supplies upon the Western Front to the exclusion of the Russian Army. It is strange indeed, but nevertheless as I believe true, that our own military hierarchy carries some part of the responsibility for the premature and disastrous outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution.

It is impossible to read Mr. Lloyd George without turning again and again from past to present. We are not yet quit of the war and its legacies. Now, as then, England is ruled by a coalition. Now, as then, a coalition is essential to her salvation. But salvation lags. The burden of our problems is immense. Reconstruction on large lines is looming closer and closer as an inescapable necessity. But on what lines and by what machinery? Departmentalism, with its immense competence but also with its bias for routine and its over-developed critical faculty, saps the strength of the executive and ties it to the apron-strings of bureaucracy. Now, as then, there are striking exceptions to the process. It is modified here and there by the vigour of a single Minister, but action tends to be unco-ordinated and therefore unbalanced. In all this complex, with the Cabinet system resting on the strong bureaucracy of the great Departments, there lurks a menace to freedom and representative government which no one with political instinct can question. It is like the gathering peril of the submarine at the opening of 1917, still undeclared in its full intensity. Now, as then, time is a vital factor. Now, as then, the cardinal question is the character of our executive. Were we wise in scrapping so completely the War Cabinet system, with its central co-ordinating authority free from departmental ties? If any are sure of it, I am not of their number. Mr. Lloyd George's new volume will be a classic on its central theme—the fitting of representative government to times of great emergency with freedom itself at stake upon the issue. He has rendered yet another signal service to the nation by the labour of compiling this amazing record of his own experience.

# THE DEAN'S LAST CHAPTER

By G. K. CHESTERTON

VALE. By the Very Rev. W. R. INGE. Longmans Green & Co. 3*s.* 6*d.*

IT is impossible, in dealing with Dean Inge's last book, to be critical without being controversial. Yet the controversy is not confined to the points on which the present critic might be supposed to dissent. I fancy the critique would be almost as argumentative, if it were written by another Anglican Dean, or by another Modern Churchman, or by another Evolutionist or another Eugenist. For Dean Inge has at least this rare and supreme distinction; that he distinguishes. The really fine and refreshing quality, in all his work, is that he does not say only what he is expected to say: least of all what his own followers would probably expect him to say. He does not go indefinitely in one direction through being indefinitely on one side. He is sometimes bigoted, in a queer, stubborn, almost secretive way; but he is far too fastidious to be fanatical. Much of his work might be summed up as "drawing the line somewhere"; but he draws the line where he likes. He does not run with the pack or the party; and the result is sometimes a rather bewildering labyrinth of lines. The main strategic plan of the lines, which at least are generally battle-lines, depends on the fact that he is fighting on two fronts, or more. In a sense, he is in a delicate position. He has to revere Latin and despise Latins. He has to love Modernism and loathe Modernity. It is not easy to be a Victorian regretting the lost virtue of Victorian manners, and also a Eugenist following all the fantastic experimentalists who dance down the road towards the Brave New World. It is not easy to be a Pan-Teutonist pupil of Houston Chamberlain and also an English patriot; it is not easy to be a Kensitite and also a gentleman. But Dean Inge is all these things with an inner sincerity that is not so much an ideal as an instinct; and sometimes rather a prejudice. His main course is determined by two contrary antipathies; a dislike of the ancient authority called Catholicism, and a dislike of the modern crudity which has its extreme in Communism. Curiously enough, these two opposite passions sometimes produce a sort of moderation; which in one or two cases amounts almost to caution. His prejudices, which are precious to him, must sometimes be handled carefully, like other precious things. He cannot go too far in disagreeing with one of his enemies, without the horrid possibility of agreeing with the other. Thus he can remain erect with a certain air of dignity and detachment, and continue for whole pages to be quite moderate and reasonable, upheld on either side by the converging violence of two contradictory hatreds.

In this book he gives a very graceful and luminous outline of his own career, and summary of his opinions; and the first fact to be noted, if it were not already obvious, is that in all these antitheses he shows a fine quality of mind somewhere. Thus, in the case of Latin *versus* Latins, Belloc and better judges than I have warmly admired the fine shade of style in his Latin poetry; and I can see for myself that he has an admirable style in his English prose. This makes it the more mysterious that, in speaking of the living Latin culture, he will suddenly begin to talk like some provincial Babbitt babbling about Wops and Dagoes. One of the defects of his style, and of his logic, is his curious way of lumping two things together, betraying conventional or even snobbish association of ideas. He will write "among the slum-dwellers and the feeble-minded"; for all the world as if happening to live in a shabby house were something so substantially identical with being half-witted, that there is no need to discuss them separately. He says that Mr. Dawson "gives us a harrowing picture

of England and Scotland overrun by Irish, the United States by Mexicans and negroes, France by Italians (who, however, are not undesirable citizens) and Sengalese." I cannot but deplore, with a groan, the weak-mindedness of that concession about Italians.

Sometimes this double recoil, from his divided foes, produces a rather amusing effect. He will make a concession, and then try to minimize it, in a hasty fashion that seems highly inadequate. After pursuing for pages the extreme Eugenic argument for what is called Birth-Control, he suddenly pulls himself up, admits that it may seem not to be treating the body " in sanctification and honour " ; and adds " These matters must be left to the taste and conscience of each married couple." Then why not leave the married couples with the taste and conscience they all had, before his favourite agitation began ? Then, with the whole modern world staring him in the face, he remarks almost primly, " Already, it is said, many unmarried girls are less careful of their virginity than they used to be." The only appropriate answer I can think of would be the piercing yell or shriek, with which this remark would be received by the Youth now assembled in a night-club or a Chelsea rag. " My dear, isn't he quite too frightfully luscious an old scream ! " In the same odd tone, he minimizes " the curious fashion which has led about a dozen men of letters to join the Church of Rome " ; but admits that Mr. Noyes and Mr. Dawson are a sad loss. Then he adds, with the same sort of gloomy haste, " It is useless to speculate on their motives " ; as if it were the mystery of Mr. Noyes cutting his own throat or Mr. Dawson hanging himself. And as if both Mr. Noyes and Mr. Dawson had not written whole thick books telling all about their motives, and showing them to be perfectly rational and intelligible. Remarks like this are surely provocative enough to excuse a reviewer with my convictions accepting the challenge ; but I need not say that there is much else in the book with which a man of those or other convictions can sincerely sympathize ; and that I mean it as a compliment that I cannot salute the retiring Dean except with the salutation that is due to a fighter.

## PHILIP SNOWDEN'S PROGRESS

By HENRY W. NEVINSON

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By Philip Viscount Snowden. Vol. I. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 21*s*.

PHILIP SNOWDEN must always be counted among the most remarkable men of our age, and in this first volume he tells us with irresistible sincerity the story of his youth and manhood up to the end of the Great War and the deplorable Peace. He started, certainly, with advantages such as have fallen to the lot of few among our statesmen and politicians in the past. He was born a Yorkshireman of what he rightly calls that " sturdy, honest, blunt, outspoken type," and from boyhood he knew the inner meaning of poverty, and the true character of the English working people, who are the vast majority in the country. His father was a weaver in a small mill at fifteen shillings a week, and his mother added a little by making wefts at home. He was born in a cottage at Cowling, near Keighley, and, like most of us in those days, he was taught little but the Bible and a few books, purchased by saving pence. The atmosphere was Radical and Methodist, and memories of Chartism and even of Peterloo still hung around the district. It is pleasing to read that when the local landowner demanded payment for use of the well in the village, and actually began to wall

it up, one powerful woman, followed by others, picked the agent up and put him in the well, leaving him there till he was sufficiently soaked.

It was not for nothing that Snowden was born a Yorkshireman, but there is a sign of a deeper and kindlier feeling in his mother's answer to a Calvinist uncle, who had been laying down the atrocious principles of his creed :—

> " You say that God loves us," she said, " as we love our own children. Do you think I would put one of my children into hell fire ? No ! not how bad he'd been ! "

On a diet of porridge, milk, and boiled puddings with sheep-head broth the boy was healthily brought up, and was the champion of the school not only in lessons, but in running and jumping. It was not till 1891, when he was about twenty-seven, that what seemed a trivial accident brought on an inflammation of the spine that destroyed his control over his lower limbs. He tells us that the conviction he could never recover brought neither grief nor despondency. " I calmly resigned myself to what could not be helped." I can think of no parallel to that noble resolve except that when Henry Fawcett was blinded in both eyes by shot from his father's gun, he resolved at once that it should make no difference to his career.

The Civil Service, in which he had acted as Revenue Collector, chiefly in Scotland and the Orkneys, kept his place open for two years, and then he thought of reading for the Bar. But in the meantime he had been overcome by the Socialistic influences of those days, and had read Blatchford's *Merrie England* and his *Clarion*, Edward Carpenter's prose works, perhaps Ruskin, and similar books that we were all reading then. He admits, as nearly all of us might admit, that he never read Marx. He became acquainted with Keir Hardie, Bruce Glazier, and other Socialist leaders, joined the I.L.P., which was founded at Bradford in 1893, and went on speaking tours all over the country for the payment of five shillings (afterwards ten shillings) a speech and travelling expenses. For ten years this method of livelihood continued, and it taught him much. It taught him the difference between speaking in halls and speaking in the open air. It taught him to be ready with answers to the questions that are invariably asked. It kept him in touch with the minds of the working people, and best of all, in my opinion, it proved to him the utter worthlessness of resolutions passed at Conferences or other public meetings. How often have I myself seen a platform and a vast audience go away perfectly satisfied if a resolution has been passed unanimously! Everyone seems to think that a resolution is the same as action. Snowden soon learnt better :—

> " My experience of Conferences had taught me to attach very little importance to their resolutions. Of the hundreds of resolutions I have seen passed by Labour Conferences outlining a drastic programme of reform, I can hardly call to mind one which has had any practical effect. Conferences will talk ; let them talk. Governments, including Labour Governments, dispose of Conference resolutions."

These years of practice in public speaking gave Snowden a fine confidence. He advises all beginners to prepare their speeches carefully. At first he even learnt his by heart, but when in 1900 he stood as candidate for Blackburn, he tells us he never felt the strain of public speaking. In a month's campaign he would speak at two or three meetings every night, and he came out as fresh at the end as at the beginning. He attributes this advantage to experience and the management of his voice, and he never had the exhausting task of preparing his speeches. He always trusted to the inspiration of the moment.

He was not elected till 1906 at the time of the great Liberal and Labour reaction. In the House of Commons he had the wit to discover at once that rhetoric is entirely

out of place, but a reputation as a violent and dangerous revolutionary followed him. Let me take only a few sentences from the account of him given by the *Weekly Sun* in July, 1907:

> " When Mr. Snowden first confronted the House of Commons there was that creeping of the blood, that pricking of the skin, that tendency of the hair to stand on end, that cleaving of the tongue to the roof of the mouth which mortality is liable to in the presence of the supernatural . . . Mr. Snowden would be more at home in some wild National Assembly, drawing up lists of proscription against the aristocrats. . . . The background against which that menacing figure should be set is one of fire and sword, red ruin, and the breaking up of laws. . . . He would have a short way with the aristocrats. The eye of imagination sees him with a tricolour cockade stuck in a red cap of liberty, marching before the tumbrils as they carry their victims to the guillotine."

That is a terrible similitude, and I, like all his friends, must be delighted and surprised that, though now raised to a high rank among the British aristocracy, Viscount Snowden still keeps a head on his shoulders.

After his criticism upon a clause in the Old Age Pensions Bill, Mr. Lloyd George protested against the " acrid ferocity " with which Snowden had attacked the Government, and Snowden now complains that the phrase gave him the reputation for bitterness which has stuck to him ever since. But there may have been other reasons, though personally I have always known him as reasonable and even urbane. One might give instances of his " acrid ferocity " in his attacks upon his own Labour Party during what he calls " the astounding catastrophe of 1931." But that wretched divergence must be left to the second volume. Here he lets off a few shafts of rather unkind irony against the present Prime Minister, who was so long his colleague on the I.L.P., and to whom he owes so much both in work for the Labour cause and in office. When there was a question of co-operation between Liberalism and Labour (about 1910) he writes that Mr. MacDonald " suffered in those days from a failing which has grown upon him with advancing years, of being unable to make a speech which was not open to any interpretation a person chose to put upon it." On the question of the workers' contributions to the Insurance scheme, he writes, " Our differences led to a rather acrimonious discussion in the columns of the *Labour Leader* between Mr. MacDonald and myself, in which I surpassed him in the vigour of my language, but did not equal him in evading the point at issue ! " Again, on the proposal to hold a meeting in Leicester for recruiting in the War, a letter from Mr. MacDonald to the Mayor is quoted in full, and Snowden comments on it: " It is worth producing as a typical example of his style. It shows that his facility in dancing round the mulberry bush is not a recently acquired accomplishment." But enough of these examples of " acrid ferocity." Let me quote rather as fine a repartee as could be given. At a Blackburn election his opponent, Mr. Bowles, in his opening meeting had said of Philip Snowden that " he had not the brains to run a fish shop." Snowden answered this statement by simply saying, " I am sure that he has."

But indeed I could go on to almost any length quoting and commenting on this fascinating volume—all the more fascinating to me because it deals with events in which I had some part, and in opinions which I nearly always shared. For it includes the Great War, the struggle against conscription, the attempts at negotiated peace, fatally thwarted by Mr. Lloyd George in combination with the Northcliffe Press, and the ominous Treaties under the shadow of which we still suffer. But I can now only make a reference to the excellent chapter on Women's Suffrage. Among the politicians four were then most to be trusted—Keir Hardie (that noblest of Labour leaders), George Lansbury, Lord Robert Cecil, and Philip Snowden, whom Mrs.

Snowden so finely supported. Snowden was opposed to the militant tactics, but I would remind him of his own experience that resolutions are utterly useless, and that a reasonable band of Suffragists had been passing resolutions for about forty years, and would still be passing resolutions but for the militants' action. For the rest, I can only say with what interest and apprehension some of his best friends and admirers look forward to a second volume in which the villager will trace his progress through high office in the State to his aristocratic place in the House of Lords.

## THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

AH, WILDERNESS! AND DAYS WITHOUT END. By Eugene O'Neill. CAPE. *7s. 6d.*

ADMIRERS of Mr. Eugene O'Neill who lament that he should rashly suffer the artist in him to be thrust aside by the prophet, the philosopher, the thinker will take fresh hope from his latest play, *Days Without End*. For here the thinker appears to have found finality in a return to the religious orthodoxy of his Catholic childhood. He stages an argument in the mind of a man who has never ceased to be, even when most rigid in his denials, acutely aware of the need for religion. " First it was Atheism unadorned. Then it was Atheism wedded to Socialism. But Socialism proved too weak-kneed a mate, and the next I heard " (a friendly Catholic priest is speaking) " Atheism was living in free love with Anarchism, with a curse by Nietzsche to bless the union. And then came the Bolshevik dawn. . . . " But Communism did not hold him long. He sought refuge in the defeatist mysticism of the East, but that, he decided, was not for the Western soul, and he turned to Greek mythology. Then he was found " bogged down " in evolutionary scientific truth again—a dyed-in-the-wool mechanist. And after that he pinned his faith to married love. The remarkable thing about this twisting, passionate pilgrimage is that to John Loving all religions present themselves as possible hiding-places. It is as though he had once in a half-forgotten childhood known a comforting peace, a security, a joy that blindly, instinctively he was always seeking to regain. He desires, or one half of him desires,that freedom which is to be found by some natures only in submission ; the other half of him is a sensual materialist, scornfully mocking these spiritual gropings. He has only to betray his married happiness to be plunged into the supreme crisis of his life. Mundane love, like religion, has failed him, but through it he may be led to that love which is symbolized by the Cross in the church of his childhood, and at its foot he must either submit or perish.

The play depends for its drama, then, upon the spectacle of a tortured human being in the throes of doubt and upon the story of an infidelity which brings the injured wife to the point of death and the distracted husband to a prayer which is miraculously answered. Mr. O'Neill shows all his accustomed psychological acuteness in his study of the wife and of the husband's temptress and writes for them a scene which might well make an actress's mouth water ; he contrives also to put a good deal of dramatic vigour into the conflict between the hero and his other self ; but those who regret Mr. O'Neill's efforts to expound doctrines are entitled to point out that the argument which takes up so much room in the play is marked by no great originality of thought. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells have at least the excuse for their hot-gospelling, that they have themselves invented the religions they preach, but Mr. O'Neill writes of established faiths as though he had invented them. So many of the ideas he treats as discoveries have been more adequately discussed by thinkers

who have not been under the necessity of casting their thought into dramatic form. But even now that he has boxed the compass of religious speculation it is probably delusive to hope that he will be content with what of truth, beauty and goodness are implicit in every passionate portrayal of life. The thinker is as much a part of him as the artist and is likely to live as long, taking its share of an energy which happily seems boundless, but it is only right to remember that Mr. O'Neill's determination to make drama solve the riddle of the universe is but the defect of the quality that impels him to make a fresh technical experiment with every new play and so, even by his failures, to increase our knowledge of stage possibilities. In *Days Without End* he avoids soliloquy by personifying the two sides of his hero's character, employing a masked actor to represent what is evil. To the other character of the play this figure is invisible and the words he speaks are assumed to be spoken by the hero. The effect of this device, which is an adaptation of mediæval practice, can be fairly judged only in performance, but in reading the play I feel that the strength which it lends to the final scene when the evil side of John Loving dies conquered is dearly bought at the expense of the rest of the play. The priest is no more than a commentator upon the man's inner conflict, and the presence on the stage of two more or less symbolic figures might well strain the patience of a modern audience.

Readers who find the propagandist flavour of *Days Without End* too strong for their taste, may discover pleasant consolation in *Ah, Wilderness !* It is a conventional little comedy, charming in its sentiment and surprising in its tolerance. Mr. O'Neill describes the troubles of a youth who has just discovered poetry and love and the want of genius in his elders, and smiles them at last all tenderly, all wisely away.

ANTHONY ORMSBY

## THE LAST HALF-CENTURY

A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR TIMES. By J. A. Spender. Cassell. 10*s.* 6*d.*

MR. SPENDER, who for long held an honourable position in the world of Liberal journalism, is now at work " on an extended history dealing in detail with the foreign and domestic events of our time." He has broken off his labours in order to produce the book under review, a summarized version of the events in the period 1886 to 1932. It is intended for teachers, students and the younger generation. Mr. Spender is aware of the dangers and difficulties involved in any such attempt to write contemporary history. An account of the political and social history of the years 1886 to 1932 must inevitably be coloured by the particular political and social pigment of the author's eyes and mind. Mr. Spender does not pretend that his book is not thus pigmented, but he claims that he has given the reader the facts " which will enable him to form his own judgment, when he differs from mine."

Mr. Spender's good intentions and faith are not in question, but no one who does not share his political bias and personal opinions could agree that he has succeeded in his aim. Success was, indeed, not possible in the nature of things. The potting of history on this scale makes it impossible to state the " facts " in such a way that the ignorant student can " form his own judgment." Let us take a comparatively unimportant example, but a very clear one. Mr. Spender disposes of the first Labour Government in two pages and devotes less than a page to the election in the autumn of 1924 and the Zinoviev letter incident. There are many millions of persons in Europe to-day who believe that the economic class-struggle is one at least of the fundamental

causes of the chief events with which Mr. Spender is dealing. That in itself is an historic fact at least as important as Captain Scott's antarctic expedition, but only an already informed and rather intelligent student will deduce the fact from Mr. Spender's history, though he will find a whole paragraph devoted to Captain Scott. When we come to the election which put the Labour Government out and Mr. Baldwin in, no judgment on the facts is possible unless we know (1) that in the opinion of many people the Zinoviev letter was a forgery, (2) that in the opinion of many people it was deliberately used by those who knew it to be a forgery to destroy the chance of a further lease of power to the Labour Government, (3) that in the opinion of many people the incident is a good example of the results of the economic class-struggle and shows how the possessing classes will go to any lengths in order to destroy a political party which threatens even remotely to change the economic system by constitutional methods. But the student could not possibly gather anything of this from Mr. Spender's account. He could not possibly gather that the whole significance of the event depends upon whether or not the letter was a forgery, and that—to put it at its lowest—there is the greatest doubt about its authenticity. On the contrary, if I were an uninformed student reading Mr. Spender, I should understand his paragraph to imply that since the Foreign Office published the document, it must have been authentic. Not being an uninformed student, my faith in the Foreign Office is not so high.

The book, as a whole, gives the official British view of contemporary history, pigmented with the diluted Liberalism of the Asquithian era. This applies to the international relations of the pre-war period no less than to the economic relations of capital and labour. Until the next world war, or provided that the official view in Britain does not become that of a Mussolini or Hitler, such books will remain useful and acceptable to many people. But the official view of national contemporary history bears the same relation to facts as an Academy portrait of a society lady bears to reality. No doubt, it is largely a question of taste; personally I prefer reality, even if Time, which has no respect for respectability, has covered it with wrinkles.

LEONARD WOOLF

## PRINCIPLES OF FINE ART

FINE ART. By H. S. Goodhart-Rendel. The Clarendon Press. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

IT is part of the value of a comprehensive study of "Fine Art" that in focussing our attention on what is common to all the arts it forces us at the same time to recognize their differences. In the lectures which he delivered as Slade Professor of Fine Art Mr. Goodhart-Rendel was concerned with principles common to music, literature, drama, painting, sculpture and architecture; and it is a great gain that he is able to approach this general problem from the special standpoint of an expert in architecture. The architect is one who, like the historian (as opposed to the chronicler), is appointed to create a useful work, but who because he is an artist must needs produce something which transcends utility. He confronts problems which are seldom apparent in the case of the poet or the musician. Mr. Goodhart-Rendel compels us, as is natural with one versed in architecture, to pay attention to the material in which the artist works, and the fitness of this or that material for the work in hand. You cannot design a building out of ideas of sound, and it is equally true that you cannot, or ought not—as Lessing pointed out long ago—to compose a poem out

of materials fit for a picture. It cannot too often be insisted that mastery in any art depends on understanding of the limits of the medium.

An analysis of architecture is helpful, also, because it compels us to realize the difference between design and execution. Unlike the poet, the architect designs his work but takes no part in the execution. But the author refuses to follow Signor Croce, who would say that the work of art was complete as soon as the idea was clearly expressed in the artist's mind. A work of art according to Mr. Goodhart-Rendel, demands not only the material, consisting of ideas, and the combination of ideas in the synthetic process of imagination, but also a vehicle, consisting of something in sensible form—masses, shapes, colours, sounds ; the artistic process is not complete until the idea or intuition has been externalized so that it can be *communicated* to a recipient. He makes full use of Croce's valuable analysis of the early stages of the artistic process, but refuses to follow him into the absurdity which denied any part to communication within that process ; and he is disposed to think that many modern artists who have no object but " self-expression " are merely relieving tedium by " playing games with themselves, practising curious steps, jumping imaginary obstacles."

On the subject of art criticism he suggests four tests which every work of art should be required to pass. These tests, I think, both overlap and are insufficient, though they are sound so far as they go. I do not think that he makes good his argument that " the method of testing should be exclusively intellectual " ; for every one of the tests that he imposes depends upon an element of pure intuition, and the character of the intuition is at least as important to sound criticism as the intellectual judgment about it. I mean, for example, the first act in the critical process is that which springs from a faculty for seeing what the artist sees—a sensibility which has been modified by experience and judgment, but is now manifested intuitively before logical judgment can be applied. The author, moreover, seems to have imposed a rather arbitrary restriction on the meaning of *critic* when he confines his function to that of judging, and separates it from interpretation. For critical judgment involves, as Sainte-Beuve pointed out, *definition* of essential qualities, and that in turn depends on understanding of innumerable circumstances upon which those qualities depend ; and when we examine these we are very near the interpretative business which Matthew Arnold praised. At many points it is easy to disagree with Mr. Goodhart-Rendel. But that is because he is downright, suggestive and occasionally provocative. It may be added that, perhaps because he keeps some of the concrete realities of art always before him, he has the gift of stating difficult problems in simple terms.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

## MODERN PROSE

MODERN PROSE STYLE. By Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press. 6*s*.

WHAT is prose ? Mr. Dobrée does not waste time hunting for a definition, nor does he seek to confine his discussion to " literature " of a certain kind : with M. Jourdain he accepts prose as being that we talk and write every day of our lives. He is equally decisive in his dealing with the word " style " ; it is, for his purposes (and in his phrase), the sound of a writer's voice. Without burking any issues or begging any questions, he plunges us straight into a discussion of how people write : how

they choose, how they arrange, their words—whether it be consciously or unconsciously—and what differing effects are produced in the reader's mind by characteristic vocabularies, rhythms, and tones (as it were) of voice in different writers. Most of us have an uninteresting " voice " when we write : we are unable, or if we can we do not trouble, to moderate its inflections ; and in three-quarters of what is written the writer is not speaking at all—the voice (as Mr. Dobrée puts it) is the voice of the tape-machine. Mr. Dobrée, therefore, has chosen his examples of modern prose style from writers who are interesting persons, and who use their voices skilfully (and so reveal their mind and their personality—for it is true that *le style c'est l'homme même*) to communicate what they have in mind. In fact, he quotes passages from some seventy modern writers and analyses their effects and how those effects are produced.

It must be said immediately that his book is itself excellently written, and that, falling into his own category of " explanatory " prose, it has all the virtues that prose of that kind should possess : it is lucid and economical, and makes its points effectively without ever seeming either to wheedle or to bully. To turn from manner to substance (and exactly what is meant by that, and how far it is possible to do it, are questions the difficulty of which Mr. Dobrée's exposition most admirably reveals), his views are sensible, his examples are judiciously chosen, and his judgments are fair—which is presumably what he has in mind when he says in his preface " Authors and critics will either find what I have to say commonplace and obvious, or will be irritated into disagreement."

Prose, according to Mr. Dobrée's classification, is either Descriptive (of action, people, or things), Explanatory (science, law, philosophy, history, criticism, provide examples in this class), or Emotive (a word for which we all, like Mr. Dobrée, would welcome a substitute). Mr. Dobrée probably would not claim that this classification is final or exhaustive ; it is quite sufficient, however, for practical purposes, and it raises one problem which is fundamental : it is a classification in which the species overlap. All prose is emotive, that is to say its effects depend upon the associations of words and ideas (and it is the failure to deal with the difference between these two different kinds of associations which is, I think, the only *desideratum* in the book) as well as upon meaning ; so that all descriptive or explanatory prose is in some—it may be, the least—degree also emotive. Whether purely emotive prose is possible is a question which some contemporary writers—Mr. Joyce, for instance, and Miss Stein in some of their productions—have provoked. Mr. Dobrée, indeed, questions (p. 186) whether purely emotive prose is possible, and raises (p. 15) a similar doubt about pure narrative. He might go farther than he does. The types, he says, are not kept apart " in practice " ; nobody tells a story simply for the sake of telling a story—everyone desires to arouse some emotion or other in his hearer. This, though true, seems to be judging the matter solely by the intention of the writer, not by the effect, or possible effect, of his words upon us—and it is the latter attitude that Mr. Dobrée adopts at most places in his book.

It is enough to say that Mr. Dobrée describes very clearly the functions of language, and criticises his authors, mainly as workers with that instrument—an attitude which is becoming common among critics to-day, and should lead to a more enlightened and detached view of literature among those who listen to them.

The detailed criticism of the chosen examples will amuse even those readers to whom the theoretical side of this book seems fairly elementary ; and it is interesting to read the passages, guess (if one does not know) their authors, judge the quality

of the style, and compare one's estimate with Mr. Dobrée's, learning from him some of the technical devices whereby a particular effect has been obtained.

What, in the end, is the impression of modern prose style that we gain from reading the examples chosen by Mr. Dobrée ? Is there such a thing as modern prose style at all ? The answer seems to be that ordinary writers write better, more directly, more carefully, to-day than they did twenty or thirty or more years ago. Thirty or forty of the writers quoted here would not have written prose worth quoting if they had written in the last century. Are they, however, one is forced to ask, worth quoting now—now that they have become conscious of the sound of their own voices and care about the canons of effective speech ? One is left with the reflection, depressing or comforting in accordance with one's own temperament, that the prose of most writers, however good it has become, remains uninteresting, and that the masters, the artists who move us to admiration, are as few as ever.

JOHN SPARROW

## A TRAVELLER'S STORY

DESERT AND FOREST: THE EXPLORATION OF ABYSSINIAN DANAKIL. By L. M. Nesbitt. Cape, 12*s.* 6*d.*

IT becomes less and less easy to explore unknown places, but this book proves that they still exist. It is the record of an expedition undertaken by an English mining engineer and two Italians into the Danakil country. Some four hundred miles long and a hundred and fifty broad, this region, an old sea-bed like the valley of the Jordan, forms part of Abyssinia and extends over the border of Eritrea. But although it belongs to Abyssinia, " the agents of the government are unable to penetrate into its deserts, except at the fringes," for it is inhabited by dangerous savages, is largely waterless, and since much of it is from three to four hundred feet below the level of the Red Sea, it may be guessed that the climate is among the most torrid in the world. These facts, and the additional one that the members of the only three European expeditions that have ever attempted to travel through the Danakil Depression (which they did in the seventies and eighties of the last century) were all murdered, would not seem to make the country an inviting one to anybody lacking in courage, enterprise, and hardihood. Mr. Nesbitt and his companions were successful, but their success was not easily won. They spent three of the most arduous months it is possible to imagine, and they are likely to bear the marks of their experience for the rest of their lives. Three of their native servants were murdered and one went mad, they lost ten camels and three mules, and their own lives were in constant danger, for " the Danakils kill any stranger at sight," and " the taking of life has become a habit of their nature." " We fear the British," say the Abyssinians, " we hate the Italians ; we loathe the French." But as for the Danakils, they seem for the most part to regard strangers as worthy only to be plundered, murdered, and then mutilated. Without almost unbelievable fortitude and determination, to say nothing of skilful diplomacy and the bodily vigour to endure privations, thirst, and a temperature that was often between 140 degrees and 156 degrees in the shade, Mr. Nesbitt and his companions would have had no hope of making any progress at all. That they gained their object can only perhaps be accounted for in the words of one of the native members of the party : " It was written that we should come out alive. Allah alone protected us."

The least skilful record of such a journey could scarcely have failed to hold the

attention, but Mr. Nesbitt's book is anything but unskilful. I think it might be called a work of art. It is very well composed, the perfect expression of a thoroughly seasoned and well composed character, at once solid and sensitive ; and it is written in a beautifully clear prose which is free of affectation, but has a rather courtly elegance of its own, somewhat reminiscent of the best travel books of a century or more ago.

Tracing Mr. Nesbitt's progress, one looks back at his opening descriptions of life in that peculiar capital, Addis Ababa, and on the surrounding plateau, as at some vision of civilization and comfort at their apogee. The colony of Russian *émigrés*, the needy adventurers, the ramshackle squalor, the Greek hotel-keeper with a hundred cats, and the currency of silver thalers (still, it seems, minted in Vienna and stamped with the date 1780 and the effigy of Maria Theresa, believed locally to be that of the Virgin)—all these things seem to belong to a life easy, tolerable and almost commonplace compared with that in the Danakil sultanates. The Danakils, says Mr. Nesbitt :

> " are, indeed, more like wild animals than men, sleeping on the ground, living almost exclusively on raw meat and milk. No work spoils the elegance of their supple feline bodies. There are no bulging muscles in their long thin limbs. The ends of their shapely fingers can be made to curve back under pressure, as only the soft fingers of young girls can in our European races. . . . The type is a fusion of that of the ancient Egyptian and the Arab."

Savages they are, but not always devoid of graces other than the physical. The forests in the earlier part of the journey, the deserts in the later, seemed hardly likely to harbour such beings as Koko, capable of loyalty and fortitude, and " extraordinarily reliable and versatile" ; as Suni Maa, that weirdest of ancients, who said that " there are things, not of this world, but mysterious, and superior, and worthy of being sought to the exclusion of everything else " ; and as the girl Aysha, " beautifully formed, and full of a natural grace, neither bashful nor awkward."

Here is a passage which affords a fairly typical illustration both of the country and of Mr. Nesbitt's clear-cut style :

> " From these volcanic crags, we passed on, and came to conical calcareous hills. They looked unreal, white and glistening in the setting sun. There was no grass, nor any trees or bushes ; no birds flew in the air, not an insect crawled on the uneven soil. The long line of camels rocked slowly along amid the white severe hills, which looked like gigantic bleached skulls against the yellow sky. . . . The place was called Dadda, and here we spent the night amongst the gloomy Assassibabiforo hills."

What a journey ! Through terrible lunar landscapes of chalk and salt and sand, over escarpments of sharp-edged black basalt and lava which gave out a metallic tinkling and seemed like "spear-points, knives and tooth-edged saws, thrown together in confusion " the explorers struggled on, again and again missing extinction as if by a miracle. Perhaps their narrowest escape was at a place called Alo, where their enemies approached them in force at night, but failed to find them :

> " Voices in this remote desert, and at night ! For scores of miles around us there was nothing to support life : who was it that was now moving through those plains of death ? "

Mr. Nesbitt has already presented the scientific findings of his expedition to the Royal Geographical Society. In *Desert and Forest* he has made an addition of rare beauty to the literature of African exploration.

WILLIAM PLOMER

# THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

THE METAPHYSICAL POETS: DONNE, HERBERT, VAUGHAN, TRAHERNE. By J. B. LEISHMAN. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press. 10*s*.

MR. LEISHMAN'S book is, as he tells us, the result of several years' teaching, and the lecturer is at times apparent in it, whether in such admonitory phrases as " notice this passage " or in the frequency with which he cites passages to be noticed. Yet the purpose of instruction never unpleasantly obtrudes, while such a patient subordination of himself to his material as he practises is a signal merit. Indeed, his self-effacement is such that he continually leaves the poets of his choice to speak for themselves, adding only such elucidatory comment as seems to him necessary for the complete understanding and enjoyment of their utterance. Nor are his comments always his own. In making, for example, the rough places of Donne smooth, he often quotes direct from Professor Grierson's " invaluable commentary."

This frank resort to the best authorities, wherever they exist, in preference to himself is no mere labour-saving device, but is characteristic of his sober objective method. We may miss in consequence the kind of discoveries or divinations which demand a more intimate identification of the critic with his subject than Mr. Leishman dares. But amid so much perversely personal criticism it is refreshing to meet a critic who intrudes himself so little, who quotes at length from Walton's biographies because he thinks that a modern cannot add much to them or who, in discussing the great theological controversy in which Donne was involved as Morton's assistant, considers that he cannot do better than abridge Gosse's account.

Yet, it would be unfair to suggest that Mr. Leishman is no more than a deft sifter and producer of certain literary material or that his book is simply a sort of anthology of " metaphysical poetry," enriched by unusually full notes and comments. He has, indeed, given such a representative selection from the work of each of the four poets he considers that his book has the value of a small anthology. It is because he keeps us always close to the poets and the period he is studying, that his book is at once so reliable and revealing. For his gifts as an interpreter are no less real for being often concealed behind the skill with which he arranges a sequence of poems to give the reader a rapid survey of the nature of a poet's experience. And just as he emphasizes, by illustration even more effectively than by comment, the continuity and complexity of a single poet's experience, so he insists on the continuity of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Renaissance cannot, perhaps, be wholly explained as " but a fertilization of the mediæval mind," but it is certainly true that there was no hard line between it and what we call the Middle Ages. In Elizabethan literature the mediæval current was rather submerged beneath the tide of new life which was running so strongly. But in the literature of the pre-Augustan seventeenth century it came to the surface again and certain characteristic mediæval conceptions, particularly the antithesis between the world and the spirit, were even intensified by certain of the characteristic movements and ideas of the Renaissance.

It is as participators, in different ways and degrees, in this conflict of illusion and disillusion, of the new and the old, of imagination and science that Mr. Leishman sees Donne, Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne. Donne, of course, embodies the conflict most intensely. His restless curiosity and bold speculation seem, as Mr. Leishman remarks, especially characteristic of the Renaissance; yet it is in him that " the elements of what we may roughly call mediævalism are exceptionally strong." While, however, Mr. Leishman traces the play of these conflicting forces in the progress

from Jack Donne to Dr. Donne with scholarly thoroughness and also marks the surprising modernity of mood and conception which the conflict at times generated, his study of Donne, if the longest, is the least distinctive of the four. He has not experienced Donne with the same degree of intimacy as Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne, being content to observe his features and the changes which passed over them with an objective detachment which hardly reaches to the reality of so possessed a spirit. And with this avoidance of the challenge to his understanding of the demonic goes perhaps a tendency to exaggerate the potency of souls into whose soberer conflicts he can enter without risk of distraction. The tendency is particularly evident in his treatment of Herbert, for whose perpetual struggle after inward peace he claims, we feel, a profounder significance than Herbert's poetry expresses. But in discrediting the picture of Herbert as a mild and retiring gentleman with a taste for flowers, he has certainly rediscovered a man behind a saintly convention. And in the study of Henry Vaughan which follows he has revealed the meaning of a mystic. He does not pretend to explain Vaughan's conversion. But of the Vision which that conversion quickened and the lunar play of light and darkness in it he shows so sensitive an understanding that his essay should lead many readers not only to submit themselves anew to the " still soft call " of Vaughan's verses, but to share, too, Mr. Leishman's conviction that the spiritual discovery of Vaughan and Traherne was quite as important as any of those made by members of the Royal Society.

Certainly his studies of these two poets of an innocence regained are the most persuasive in the book. Yet his interpretation of them, if more intimately his own than his account of Donne, is no less closely derived from and interwoven with what they wrote in verse and prose. And because he never separates the ideas from the words of a poet, his critical appreciation of the texture of Vaughan's verse or Traherne's prose, admirable in its technical acuteness, is at the same time an appreciation of the unique quality of their perception, and a delicate definition of their being. He is a critic who comes near to his subject by preserving his right distance from it. It is not perhaps the most penetrating method. But it ensures a basis of correct observation. On this basis Mr. Leishman has composed a sympathetic survey of a fascinating field.

H. I'A. FAUSSET

## A SCIENTIST AS DICTATOR

IF I WERE DICTATOR. By JULIAN S. HUXLEY. Methuen. 2*s.* 6*d.*

IF Mr. Huxley were offered a dictator's job, he would find it hard to refuse, for, as a " scientific humanist," he is full of ideas for promoting the health, wealth and happiness of mankind. Science, he feels, has given us considerable control over Nature, but human nature and human society are still largely under the sway of older habits of thought. We are " now just beginning to realize that these, too, could be understood and controlled by the use of scientific method."

Science proceeds by ordered experiment, and an essential feature of Mr. Huxley's rule would be the carrying out of an immense series of experiments in every department of social life. He would set on foot a certain health policy, let us say, within a given area, and observe results in relation to a " control " area where existing conditions were left untouched. His policies, too, would be based on a vast programme of research embracing problems of human psychology and social adaptation. In this

small book a good many details are bound to remain more or less obscure—finance, for instance, which must seriously handicap an ambitious dictator who is required, rightly or wrongly, to produce a balanced budget. But Mr. Huxley—who favours, roughly, a system of planned capitalism with Fascist features but a non-Fascist spirit—emphasizes that a country's real wealth depends, in his view, not on balance sheets or gold stores but on its total productive capacity.

He also realizes that in the long run a dictator must have popular support; but this is fairly easily obtained by any dictator who controls the fertile resources of modern propaganda, and Mr. Huxley would have no scruples in employing these resources to the full. And yet, I feel, he would not be ultimately satisfied with a people doped and dragooned into an illusion of happiness. He would want his subjects to recognize freely that he had given them a life really worth living; and here I am not so sure that he would succeed. With slums and smoke and roads and urban congestion and disease he would, I am sure, deal most efficiently; and he has some good ideas for giving certain forms of art an active and honoured place in society. But all this means that he is rather like a general with brilliant plans for mobilizing his army and getting it into fighting trim. Would his soldiers feel equally satisfied with his marching orders? Would they, indeed, feel that he had any marching orders to give?

"The only goal for life which I recognize," says Mr. Huxley, "is more life—more satisfying experience, richer and fuller being." And again—"I have two main aims: to provide a foundation of physical and mental well-being all round; and, building on this foundation, to provide for the satisfaction of the deeper human impulses, both towards self-expression and self-sacrifice, and for their satisfaction in ways which are felt to have value and significance." Between these phrases, and the phrases used by Mr. Huxley to describe his concrete plans, there is a striking difference. In speaking of methods he is lucid and precise; in speaking of goals he is vague.

I think that one eventual effect of Mr. Huxley's philosophy on his subjects would be to make them acutely aware of this contrast. They would feel that imaginative experience, however respectfully spoken of by the Dictator in his public orations, had no organic place in the social-scientific scheme. (It is significant, perhaps, that Mr. Huxley, in his plans for art, deals with architecture, painting and design—the socially useful arts—but not with poetry or music.) They would notice that the findings of the imagination were not held by science to throw any reliable light on the structure of the universe—that their Dictator, though admitting art as a source of pleasure, regarded science as the only trustworthy guardian of *truth*. Hence they would be compelled to feel despondently that in exercising imagination they were indulging in no more than a pleasant diversion, inherently incapable of bringing them into touch with the "real universe."

This is the impasse towards which, in my opinion, "scientific humanism" must eventually lead; and from which a way of escape can be found only through the development of a truly humanistic science. Such a science would not confine itself to the analysis of measurable phenomena; nor, following Mr. Huxley, would it be complacently content to "maintain politely but firmly that man is the highest being of which men have knowledge." It would seek, rather, to understand *what it is* that the poet, the artist, and the mystic are able to perceive in heightened states of consciousness. It would seek, in fact, to take up and carry on that philosophical account of the Nature of Imagination which Coleridge began in the thirteenth chapter of *Biographia Literaria*.

CHARLES DAVY

## A HINDU PILGRIMAGE

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN. By Bhagwan Shri Hamsa, with an Introduction by W. B. Yeats. Faber and Faber. 8*s.* 6*d.*

MR. YEATS'S lengthy commentary upon ascetic experience as described in this book is an important addition to his prose works. " No two civilizations prove or assume the same things," he writes, " but behind both hides the unchanging experience of simple men and women. When I read the travels of Purohit Swāmi, or of his master, Bhagwān Shri Hamsa, I am among familiar things." *The Holy Mountain* is the narrative by a living Hindu Saint of his journey in 1908 to Mount Kailas in Tibet—a mountain whose sheer beauty, and almost-inaccessibility, are a perfect physical pattern of that final state of spiritual development which the journey outwardly symbolizes. It is the same experience, and closely paralleled in the telling, as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress ;* the same, indeed, as such outstanding events in our own historical inheritance as the visit of Wordsworth to Tintern, and the ecstasy of St. Paul.

It is distinguished by the combination of intense self-concentration, on the one hand, and an absolute simplicity of mind in total freedom from introspective complications on the other. This simplicity was assisted by the great perils and difficulties of the outward journey, which are treated (as by Bunyan) as the appropriate preparation for a future and more terrible ordeal. This didacticism is, however, in no case intrusive, and the book might be read quite simply as an excellent adventure story, the pilgrim preserving, in his search for abstractions, a remarkable eye for detail and all the practical sense of an explorer. As a writer, indeed, he is classed rather with the latter than with the poet-saints, and when, as on several occasions, he writes such sentences as " It is impossible to describe further the effect of this sublime scene on my mind," we feel, curiously, that the phrase is not being used as a *cliché*, but that, in truth, his power as a writer is inadequate to the situation.

Again, although the book enjoys the supreme advantage of a narrative-construction which symbolizes completely the inner experience, the writer has failed to make of it such a work of art as, in fiction for example, Mrs. Woolf made of a like experience in *To the Lighthouse*. It contains, nevertheless, passages of profound beauty, and the concluding scene in which the saint waits upon the Holy Mountain, in expectation either of the final vision or of death, is described with an art as perfect as the moment itself.

PETER BURRA

## INSPIRED IRONY

A MAD LADY'S GARLAND. By Ruth Pitter. Cresset Press. 3*s.* 6*d.*

THIS is not Miss Pitter's first book of poems ; but up to now her talent has received no recognition. It is perhaps as a result of indifference on the part of a public only too ready to acclaim the fourth-rate that this talent, formerly wholly serious, has now resorted to the grotesque. Not that the intention of her poetry is any less serious than it ever was. But its form has a new toughness, a kind of armour against indifference ; and the book is informed with an irony which, though it is never bitter, betrays a wry mockery of the society which fostered it.

The attentive reader will at once notice two things about Miss Pitter's insect-and-

reptile house—for the book is a collection of portraits, mainly of the less pleasing members of the Creation : the earwig, the spider, the flea, the cockroach, the frog, the coffin-worm. He will notice firstly that Miss Pitter knows her job ; she is serious about the technique of poetry, and her seriousness results in an unwonted tautness in the forms of her verse. Secondly, he will see that she is interested not merely in her own work, but also in poetry ; the book has an archaism which is not assumed, but derives from a profound sympathy with the modes of sixteenth and seventeenth century verse. He will welcome, too, the precision and justice of her epithets, and the sureness of rhythm which gives to such a piece as " The Coffin-Worm " a kind of finality. The worm bids his love fall to, erase the scar of care from the dead man's flesh :

> Flatter his wishful beauties ; in his ear
> Whisper he is at last beloved here ;
> Sing him (and in no false and siren strain)
> We will not leave him while a shred remain
> On his sweet bones : then shall our labour cease,
> And the imperishable part find peace
> Even from love ; meanwhile how blest he lies,
> Love in his heart, his empty hands, his eyes.

This is Miss Pitter in her straightforward manner ; elsewhere the irony is more cunningly veiled. Reading these grotesques : the song of the caterpillar who preached resurrection, the lament of the bee on the bitter rewards of love, the triumph of the cannibal (and Puritan) female spider, we experience something of the same critical pleasure as in watching a marionette show ; the antics of these creatures provide a subtle caricature of human behaviour. The criticism gains strength from its mocking expression ; this is that " alliance of levity and seriousness," characteristic of one kind of wit, of which we read in Mr. Eliot. *A Mad Lady's Garland* should bring Miss Pitter the applause which she has so long lacked. It is beautifully produced at a small price.

DILYS POWELL

## RUSSIAN DANCERS

BALLETOMANIA. By Arnold L. Haskell. Gollancz. 18*s*.

MR. ARNOLD HASKELL believes that human society is divided into three distinct castes : Russian dancers, dancers and very ordinary people. Long ago he fell so deeply in love with ballet that he set himself to learn all he could about it so that his pleasure in it should be analysable and thus deeper. Now he has put down what he knows in a book, which he clearly says is in no sense a history or complete survey of contemporary ballet but which must be the nearest thing to it yet published in this country. He is anecdotal, and writes familiarly of the famous figures of the ballet in our own time ; but always as dancers, never lapsing into trivial gossip of such private life as those dedicated to the ballet can allow themselves to have. He has his enthusiasms, but retains a sound judgment, and this book will disperse some famous legends—for example that of Diaghileff as complete evil genius where Nijinsky was concerned.

Moreover, he has learned, as many less informed devotees of the ballet have not, to credit it only with its due impressions. So many of the yearning superlatives which occur in allusions to the pre-war visits of the Russian Ballet are apparently evoked by the recollection of a time when income-tax was a shilling in the pound and all

seemed set-fair in a dividend-paying world. To all who have these rapturous memories, however, Mr. Haskell's chronicle will give pleasure, while to younger *balletomanes*, who want to know clearly who was who and what what, it will come as a refreshingly direct guide after the hazy conversational meanderings of their elders. From Taglioni to Baronova, from "Giselle" to "Choreartium," the field is wide. Mr. Haskell explores it conscientiously but always with an infectious gusto. The photographs are keys to the memory of some of our most exquisite moments in the theatre. They are lavishly supplied. There are also some amusing virile decorations by Larionov and Gontcharova.

EDITH SHACKLETON

## TWO IRISHWOMEN IN OLD RUSSIA

THE RUSSIAN JOURNALS OF MARTHA AND CATHERINE WILMOT (1803-1808). Edited by the MARCHIONESS OF LONDONDERRY and H. M. HYDE. Macmillan. 21*s*.

THESE letters and journals by two young Irishwomen, who were the guests of the versatile Princess Daschkaw in Russia during the Napoleonic epoch, though known and prized by their kinsman W. E. H. Lecky, have been sleeping in the Royal Irish Academy until now. A search for something else brought them to light and Lady Londonderry and Mr. Hyde have been so fascinated as to edit and annotate them, or rather this section of them, thoroughly.

The simplest clue to their quality is that both young women, though Martha Wilmot eventually repaid the Princess's deep affection and the kindnesses showered upon her during her stay of nearly five years by editing *her* Memoirs, would probably have been astonished that such daily outpourings upon immediate sights and doings should be taken gravely by posterity. Meant for private reading and at intervals, they have the attraction of good talk, the flow of an entertaining letter, and are capital examples of little things that no one incapable of evoking them on paper would have thought it worth while to set down. Every day we are amused, beguiled or interested by this person, that incident, some chance sight, but few have the energy to record these things and the consequence is that when most of our scribblers sit down to write they discover to us, sometimes to themselves, that everything of interest in their lives has perished in the dustbin of their forgetfulness. The life of such confidences is the details.

But when the Miss Wilmots went (in turn) upon a journey, they began with the packing and the postchaise. They gave you the fuss over the passport, the smell of the cabin, the changing weather of the voyage, the relief of landing at Cronstadt, the queer dresses in the streets, the odd hours for dinner, the strange food, the comforts and discomforts of the service and household, the talk they could understand, the mistakes they made from ignorance of Russian. You share their visit to Petersburg, their nights on the road to Moscow, the welcome of the Princess, the chatter in the evenings, their remote countryside. It is all very entertaining. None who read the originals could fail to be tempted by print, but print has the secondary disadvantage over a letter or a diary that, unlike either, it does not know when to stop. The book, then, is one to dip into, to keep by one's bed, to have ever at hand for an empty hour. To go steadily through it from end to end is unfair to it: is to feel that it might continue for ever and that, if you allowed it to do so, you would have been agreeably

wasting your time. Entertainment is our refuge. It becomes hateful when it is over-prolonged, and just because this book maintains its sparkle, with the variety offered by two sisters (Catherine is better in bulk), and one delightful Irish servant, it is not too long to be printed, but it is too long for continuous perusal. One could dip anywhere for a quotation: good letters are the sequins of writing, but the effect of shimmer is the thing, not this or that facet of the effect. By virtue of contrast, the simple thread of narrative and explanation in the Editors' prefaces is a rest. They have done it very well, and are certain to be applauded for the pleasure this discovery can yield. Catherine's portrait of Princess Daschkaw, in all her moods, is unforgettable. Martha's later letters, on a Russian funeral and about her own difficult departure, are among the best pages of all.

OSBERT BURDETT

## THE OFFICIAL AND THE CASE

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR. By WALTER GREENWOOD. Cape. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

MR. WALTER GREENWOOD may take a place in the long line of English novelists who have excelled in the comedy of manners. To say that is not to imply that this young author has yet reached the full development of his powers. On the contrary, the struggle for expression is still apparent in his work; occasionally a false note is struck when imagination is fettered by resentment. But the psychological insight, the irony and the acute observation which inform his pages prove him to be the inheritor of a great tradition.

*Love on the Dole* was a noble and moving presentation of the lives of the unemployed —the first successful attempt in this country to interpret the industrial depression in terms of literature. Its successor is a wider study of the relations between officialdom and the poor whose necessities it relieves. The rise to municipal eminence of Edgar Hargraves, the small draper, is bound up with and conditions the disintegration of Joe Shuttleworth, the miner, whose mind and body are broken by the rigours of the Means Test and the imprisonment of his wife for petty theft. Joe's first appearance before the Public Assistance Committee is an incident which will not easily be forgotten. Mr. Greenwood has expressed imaginatively a tragedy which propaganda is powerless to convey.

Yet this chapter illustrates also the weaknesses with which Mr. Greenwood has still to contend. The malevolent stupidity of the three officials is overdrawn. No doubt there are many such committees. Unquestionably, those who have feared poverty are most merciless in their hatred of the poor. But the encounter would have been more artistically convincing if one of the three—Edgar perhaps—had paused in pity or in doubt. Earlier, Mr. Greenwood has shown that he understands the meanness, the snobbishness and the pathos of the lower middle-class. Here he turns from realistic narrative to a satire that is almost burlesque.

As an historian of the people, he is superb. The terrible Mrs. Nattle of the last novel makes an effective re-appearance, but her place as commentator is taken by Daft Willie with his ghoulish interest in the dead. It is a magnificent irony that enables Mrs. Shuttleworth to achieve, through the death of her husband, a bitter security at last. This is not so successful a novel as *Love on the Dole*. But in attempting something infinitely more difficult, Mr. Greenwood has given further proof of his capacity.

AVERY HILL

# HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON

THE END OF A CHILDHOOD. By Henry Handel Richardson. Heinemann. *7s. 6d.*

HENRY HANDEL RICHARDSON is a writer with a compact body of admirers whose loyalty knits them almost into a religious brotherhood. Reading this volume I make my first acquaintance with her work. With this experience I become a member of that sodality. For here is an artist with an unflagging sense of form, that never allows her to slip into automatic construction of a story : an artist who does not tease the reader with literary experiments that distract attention from the quality of the life conveyed and the understanding that conveys it.

I see many affinities in her work. Her minute sensuousness reminds me of that of Katherine Mansfield ; but it is ampler, slower, less nervously hectic. Then she has a more removed, Delphic or sybilline quality, that reminds me of Olive Schreiner.

Between these two extremes she moves so easily as to appear artless, disguising the riches she has discovered in the world of modern psychology.

Finally, after one has admired the perfect building up of a tale, with its apt stroke of symbolism in a significant phrase or incident, one remains most impressed by the simplicity and directness of the human contacts and the author's readiness in recognizing their infinite variety, both articulate and dumb.

In this matter, indeed, one feels that here is a major artist, since always her carefully controlled structure is fulfilled by a fertile sensitiveness capable of creating a thousand little suggestive and revealing incidents. From these moments of realism to those others of an almost old-fashioned symbolism she moves freely, adding thus undertone and overtone to the octave of her story. It is beautiful art, and the critic can only pause before it, baffled by his admiration.

The title story in this collection of tales relates the death of Richard Mahoney's widow, and the immediate effect of the loss upon the two children. Mary has a job as postmistress in a little up-country town in Australia. She has refused an offer of advantageous marriage, and has decided to live only for Richard's children. Fate disapproves of this possessive pride with all its hoardingof the past and its exacerbation of the children's inherited sensitiveness. A meaningless accident snatches her from them, and then the poor, helpless little creatures are bumped down the stairs of brutal reality, through an increasing series of shocks almost too painful for the reader.

The fundamental " philosophy " of this artist is simple enough. It is the same as that of the poets Donne and Dunbar : a sense of outrage that the eternal is betrayed by the temporal. Under all her work runs the theme, " Timor mortis conturbat me." It persists even when she tries to drown it by savage satirical outcries against the physical world (human nakedness uglified by time is a frequent theme). It persuades her that " life, tapped at its core, means a standing dumbly by, to let these dream-things pass." We think we are actors, she says, but we are only spectators. Shakespeare said that, and so did Job. How unfashionable great art is !

RICHARD CHURCH

# NEW BOOKS—A SELECTED LIST

*THE BOOKS IN THIS LIST, IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN REVIEWED IN THE PRECEDING PAGES, HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AFTER CAREFUL SCRUTINY FROM A MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF CURRENT PUBLICATIONS.*

## DRAMA

PLAY PARADE. By NOEL COWARD. Heinemann. 8*s.* 6*d.*

All authors have their favourite children. Here in a fat volume at a remarkably low price is Mr. Noel Coward's private selection of the seven plays which he considers his best. In a charming preface he takes us completely into his confidence, with such disarming modesty and indiscretion that we scarcely realize he is both eating and keeping his plum cake. He likes two scenes in *Cavalcade*, sighs over *Bitter-Sweet*, and detects hysteria in *Post-Mortem*, a slightly-belated satire on war-time mentality, which has not been produced yet. As for the naughty brilliance of his earlier plays, he explains it away as Lamb explained away the Restoration Comedy.

FIRST NIGHTS. By JAMES AGATE. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 10*s.* 6*d.*

A characteristic selection from the critical articles on the drama contributed by Mr. Agate to the *Sunday Times*, from the autumn of 1930 to the spring of 1934. In republishing his vigorous and provocative Sunday pronouncements on previous occasions, Mr. Agate has modestly relied on the good offices of such distinguished writers of prefaces as C. E. Montague, Arnold Bennett and Noel Coward, to commend them to the book-buying public. Now, feeling no doubt that the time has passed for such formalities, he has dispensed with this prefatory support and written his introductory words himself. This introduction takes the form of a dedicatory epistle to Mr. Ivor Brown, in the course of which we have the engaging spectacle of one dramatic dictator of the Sunday Press presenting a handsome bouquet to the other.

## ECONOMICS AND SOCIOLOGY

UNDERSTAND THE CHINESE. By WILLIAM MARTIN. Methuen. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Journalism suffered a sad loss when William Martin died. He was only 44, and the *Journal de Genève* and the League lost him at the height of his powers: as this vivid little book proves—the last that he wrote. He had a great gift. He could summarize a long historical problem in a few words, and his qualities of speed and dispatch extended not only to the problem's history but to its solution. Here he applies himself to China, and quickly comes to essentials. He sees all the Chinese notabilities and decides that Chiang-kai-Shek must carry on: for Chiang's policy of holding the Yangtse and of gradual local pacification is right. The elegance, sympathy and above all speed with which he sifts the evidence and decides are typical of the man. And in description of Chinese travel he discovers an unsuspected gift of humour and poetry.

FORCE. By LORD DAVIES. Benn. 21*s.*

*Force* is a strange mixture. Moral theory is based a little uncertainly upon psychology, and illustrated every now and then by political examples. With this amalgam of the three sciences Lord Davies carries forward the subject of his earlier book, *The Problem of the Twentieth Century*, in which he pleaded for an International Police Force. His better arguments are unanswerable. But why over-state the case by insisting that the "next war" is the end of civilization? Or, impatient of dictatorship, forget that he who is eager for peace would rather win the dictator for peace than drive him to war?

BRITAIN'S POLITICAL FUTURE. By LORD ALLEN OF HURTWOOD. Longmans. 6*s.*

The author foresees a sad result for the general election, unless politics are speeded up and public opinion mobilized. Though he is losing faith in the National Government, Lord Allen is not Socialist enough to believe in the class war. Quick conciliation is his method: for him, there are capitalists who are losing their taste for profits but retaining their taste for efficiency. Harness them to Progress, and avoid dictatorship.

MONEY AND MORALS. By ERIC GILL. Faber and Faber. 6*s.*

The sculptor again speaks in this collection of an essay and two lectures. Mr. Gill is a fierce critic of our machine-made civilisation, and he is at his happiest in applying his logical mind to the problems of art and industry. This book, which was printed at Mr. Gill's press in his own type, has engagingly satirical illustrations by Denis Tegetmeier in no way suggesting the seriousness of the text.

OXFORD INTO COALFIELD. By ROGER DATALLER. Dent. 5*s.*

In this diary of three years' work as an organizer of adult education, Mr. Dataller describes the difficulties and successes of a campaign in the South Yorkshire coalfield. Himself an ex-pitman and an Oxford graduate, he returned to the North equipped with a first-hand knowledge of his material and with that practical idealism which is fostered by a University training at its best. The obstacles he encountered were the apathy induced by deprivation and the hostility of local powers. Trade union leaders are too seldom convinced of the need for intellectual enlightenment. But there were many students whose fine passion for learning transcended the drab conditions of their lives. Such as these confirmed in the author of this moving record a belief in "the vast potential genius of the working people."

## FICTION

SALVATION. By SHOLEM ASCH. Gollancz. 8*s.* 6*d.*

An engrossing story of Polish Jewish life a century ago, this is a specimen of the religious novel. The hero himself is a saint, and the story is conducted in an atmosphere of faith and fervour, ritualism and mysticism, closely derived from the Old Testament and decidedly Oriental. The stress of poverty and exile and the hostility of the Gentiles throw the lives of the Jews into strong relief.

EARMARKED FOR HELL. By RAMON J. SENDER. Wishart. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Translated from the Spanish, this very impressive war book deals with a war more recent than that of 1914–1918. Señor Sender himself served as a non-commissioned officer in the Spanish army that was so disastrously defeated in Morocco in 1921. He tells of the adventures of Private Viance on that occasion. They are full of the poetry of nightmare, and the hero himself, a peasant-soldier, may be regarded as a symbolic victim of the political and economic condition of his country.

LOST BATTLE. By STEPHEN GRAHAM. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Whether an unwritten epic and the consequent inhibitions would cause a man, even in Victorian times, to maintain two households, may be disputed. John Rae Belfort, bellicose Scot, agricultural expert and frustrate poet, is, for a' that, a magnificent specimen, too real, too odd to be quite likable. His compromise with respectability and the ensuing domestic entanglement are the start, perhaps, of a complete saga. So far this is Mr. Graham's best novel.

SEVEN GOTHIC TALES. By ISAK DINESEN. Putnam 7*s.* 6*d.*

The "Gothic" of these tales is the Gothic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the School of Terror without the terror. Two old ladies supping with a ghost; a mad old woman awaiting death in company with a murderer; a Prioress who turns into a monkey—these are Isak Dinesen's themes. But in spite of the mechanism of the stories —ghosts, skulls, pirates, witches—their true motive is well-bred, mannered romance. They are told in a round-about manner reminiscent of the Arabian Nights; the work of a Danish lady, they were written in English. Elegant style, artificial sentiments.

RESURRECTION. By WILLIAM GERHARDI. Cassell. 7*s.* 6*d.*

After *Futility*, *Resurrection;* after *The Polyglots* the still small voice of the astral body. This is Mr. Gerhardi's attempt to write like Proust, but with the connecting theme of psychic experience. The action of the story, in which the author is the principal actor, is contained in twenty-four hours; it begins and ends with a psychic adventure which he assures us is a true adventure. In the middle is a long digression, an account of amorous pursuits in Tunisia; before and after we have the usual recognizable portraits of public figures. The book is Mr. Gerhardi's declaration of faith in resurrection; it is written with the familiar air of witty exhaustion.

SHADOW THY DREAM. By ROSALIND WADE. Chapman and Hall. 7*s.* 6*d.*

A sketching party in Warwickshire: Miss Claythorpe the social worker, Miss Livingstone the frustrated spinster, loopy Miss Whitlow, nymphomaniac Miss Ditchin, and Uncle Tom Cobley and all. What bardage and Avonry! General emotional *mêlée;* unequal contest for a sonnet-writing yokel's favours between Miss Claythorpe and the redoubtable Ditchin; and that was the end of a social worker's month. A nice book for girls of all ages.

THE SEARCH. Dr. C. P. SNOW. Gollancz. 8*s.* 6*d.*

A serious novelist, interested in intellectual conflict and spiritual values, finds himself confronted by hideous difficulties. He must keep his characters alive, and not let them decline into vehicles of opinion; he must keep his story moving, and not let it lose itself in labyrinths of argument; his emotional climaxes must illuminate his intellectual problems and not blast them into insignificance. In *The Search* Dr. Snow has shown extraordinary skill in avoiding the pitfalls which await writers of his kidney. His sober, concentrated, carefully woven story concerns the making and marring of a young scientist, who tells the tale in the first person. He describes his education, his father's encouragment, his science master at school, his scholarship to King's College and his student friends, with the gusto for detail and enthusiasm for nascent ideas of the early Wells. But quite soon we are allowed to see that the brilliant young crystallographer, whose moments of ecstasy seem unusually convincing, suffers from divided purpose; his devotion to the impersonal truths of science conflicts with his desire to serve his friends. In this conflict lies drama; and where a lesser novelist would have wasted his material in dry argument Dr. Snow has made a fine comedy of the attempt to found a scientific institute in London, with all the intrigues, dignities, pretensions, jealousies and genuine passions of English University life.

WOMEN MUST WORK. By RICHARD ALDINGTON. Chatto and Windus. 7*s.* 6*d.*

After Wells, Sinclair Lewis; after Lewis, Richard Aldington. And how conservative they all are—if these women will work, they must weep too! Both Ann Veronica and Ann Vickers found consolation in lovers' meetings but Etta Morison, who leaves her provincial home a year or two before the war to live her own life in London, is denied even that. After nine years she could talk bravely about having "had the guts to make my own life," but it was no better than the worst Dortborough on the South Coast could have brought her. Mr. Aldington shows too little of the sympathy and understanding displayed in *The Colonel's Daughter.* Etta, whether at work or play, is not very interesting, because, really, "guts"—true self-purpose—was just what she lacked.

TO THE VANQUISHED. By I. A. R. WYLIE. Cassell. 5*s.*

Miss Wylie gives the despair of youth as the reason for the rise of Hitler; it was "a hunger for self-immolation" which drove bands of starving boys to serve him and, as they thought, the New Germany. But she goes on to show the bases of Nazi domination rotting away; sadism must ultimately destroy itself, and in her story of a country ruled by executioners it is the torturer who is vanquished. The romance of a young Storm-trooper and the daughter of a pacifist is the pivot of the book. A picture of a nation in revolution seriously meant, but emotionally not quite adequately controlled.

ANGEL MAKING MUSIC. By FERENC MOLNAR. Nicholson and Watson. 7*s.* 6*d.*

In this novel of adolescent frustration by the Hungarian author of the *Guardsman* the characteristic triangular theme assumes different shapes against a Venetian background. Very virginal, silly, jealous yet attractive, is Irma, whose hysterical infatuation contrasts strongly with the powerful love of Aurel and Judith. An admirable impressionist picture of Venice and strong characterization mark this rhapsodical story so justly recommended by the Book Society

THE DOOMINGTON WANDERER. A Book of Tales. By LOUIS GOLDING. Gollancz. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Golding here shows himself an astute and accomplished story-teller. He gilds the penny balloon, knowing that for most people what glitters is as good as gold. His tales have speed, sweep and action without the drag-anchor of psychological probability —or any other.

*Book-Jacket by Enid Lacey for "The Huge Shipwreck," a novel by Kathleen Freeman. By courtesy of J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., the publishers.*

THE TALES OF ELINOR MORDAUNT. Secker. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mrs. Elinor Mordaunt's shrewd knowledge of human nature gives a satirical tinge to her stories which keeps us alert. Moreover it enables her to overcome the mechanical requisites of the popular short story. Temperamentally she distrusts that respectability from which we endeavour to escape in the realm of fiction. Her jungles and tropical colours are as much symbolical as actual. Here are thirty-eight collected stories, all varied, for Mrs. Mordaunt can pack emotions into a Victorian room or allow them to roam the wilds of the world.

PENANG APPOINTMENT. By Norman Collins. Gollancz. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Norman Collins deliberately takes, for his first novel, a stock situation and converts it into actuality. A tearful heroine, a bibulous, penniless father and a wealthy, greedy suitor —all on an ocean voyage. Here are superlative chances for a dashing hero and for sentimental havoc. But Mr. Collins proves his witty restraint, by presenting us with a subdued and very real story of young love.

THE HUGE SHIPWRECK. By Kathleen Freeman. Dent. 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is difficult to interpret the nature of silence. Taciturnity described seems more often like stupidity than reserve. Miss Freeman, however, in a grave and economical prose, has admirably succeeded in expressing the quality of quiet self-possession in a young girl. She presents in Estella a romantic, classically disciplined by a conventional household. The subsidiary characters are only shadows. But the girl Estella is an authentic miniature of the dreamer in youth.

THE ENDLESS FURROW. By A. G. Street. Faber and Faber. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Street is not a novelist. He lacks the imaginative insight which illumines the artist's criticism of life. On the other hand, he is a faithful reporter of the rural scene. His unaffected, plodding sentences are suited to the way of living they describe. Just so do farmers set about their business. In this plain chronicle of a grocer-farmer's life, he records the labours of the country year.

MEN OF GOOD WILL. Book V. The Proud of Heart. By Jules Romains. Translated by Warre B. Wells. Lovat Dickson. 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is either too early or too late to pass judgment upon M. Romains' vast, complicated and, thus far, somewhat formless portrayal of pre-war Parisian life. Its merits are considerable, the handling of detail that of a master—one cannot, yet, say more. The present volume concentrates upon the speculations of Haverkamp, and the affair between Sammécaud and Mme. de Champcenais (which develops decisively in the course of a visit to London).

## HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

OLIVER CROMWELL. By John Buchan. Hodder and Stoughton. 21*s.*

CROMWELL. By Hilaire Belloc. Cassell. 12*s.* 6*d.*

These two books will be reviewed, the first by Mr. Hilaire Belloc, the second by Mr. Conal O'Riordan, in our next issue.

GOOD MORNING AND GOOD NIGHT. By Her Highness the Ranee Margaret of Sarawak. Constable. 15*s*.

Modern candour and octogenarian tolerance give an odd charm to these valedictory memories. The Ranee of Sarawak looks back with a smile and sees herself, as a shy Victorian bride, emerging from a sham Gothic country house to become an outlandish figure of royalty among head-hunters. "Oh, no. Dinner is too expensive!" exclaimed the Rajah Charles Brooke on the first evening of his honeymoon, and this Victorian master-pioneer proved as difficult as his Dyaks. An unconventional recalling of Victorian duties and sacrifices.

THE ROSE OF LONDON. The Life, Career and Character of Jane Shore, the Mistress of King Edward IV. Together with a Pageant of her Times and Contemporaries. By Guy Paget. Hutchinson. 18*s*.

Major Paget is as enthusiastic as the old ballad-makers, and his Jane Shore has sunny eyes "like the deep still pools of a Yorkshire peat-fed stream." He evokes the remarkable woman who was patronness of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, and escaped the condemnation of Sir Thomas More. Ample concession to picturesqueness does not conceal Major Paget's deep knowledge of Plantagenet times and the gay heraldic colours are of their period.

THE CID AND HIS SPAIN. By Ramón Menéndez Pidal. Translated by Harold Sunderland. Murray. 15*s*.

The Cid fascinated Corneille and other French poets. But Cervantes spoiled chivalry for us and even Southey's romantic gesture is forgotten. The Cid was the last hero to cross the threshold from the heroic to the historical age. He is the prototype of the chivalric ideal—moderation in the hour of victory. This is a highly specialized but an exciting expedition into a world of arms, clerics, jongleurs and Moslems, in search of the real Spanish national hero.

THE CHINESE PEOPLE. Their Past, Present and Future. By A. S. Elwell-Sutton. University Extension Library. Nicholson and Watson. 4*s*. 6*d*.

Lieut.-Comdr. Elwell-Sutton has compressed into most readable form the glory and paradoxical failure of one-fourth of the human race. The Golden Age of Poets and Sages, the Ming period of technical perfections, the Manchu invasion—the centuries roll by. Of revolutionary China, Mr. Elwell-Sutton writes practically and he is optimistic concerning a rather distant future.

JAMES I. By Charles Williams. Arthur Barker. 10*s*.

Mr. Williams distinguishes aptly between two aspects of the events of James's life. What they "meant to him is his biography; what they meant to others is history." In this sense, however, the direct evidence for biography is (apart from some delightful letters and essays) small, and the most complete approach can only be made through the medium of history. The story is very well told as a continuous narrative, several of the events, such as Gowrie's revolt, being particularly lively. It is a less easy matter to fix James precisely in his setting, and Mr. Williams has perceived the points of contact with probably as much justice as time has left us the chance of. Believing that "History . . . is shaped by all men's actions at all moments," he has enjoyed the discovery of many ironies.

THE JOURNALS AND LETTERS OF REGINALD, VISCOUNT ESHER. Vol. I. Edited by Maurice V. Brett. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 25*s*.

"The really attractive thing," Lord Esher once wrote to his son, "is to enjoy the current and the undercurrent of life; and not to float exclusively in one or the other." That was his own talented manner of living, finding, as he put it, a "higher good" in the life which could combine in one experience the "sensations" as well as the "thoughts." It was this, perhaps—his love of the "undercurrent"—which held him back on so many occasions from the acceptance of an office to which too much of himself would have to be committed. At the age of thirty-two he retired from his post as Private Secretary to Lord Hartington, and resisted all later attempts to bring him back into "the vortex of 'public life.'"

Yet, "as time passes," he found, "one wants a *tie*"; and added, in accepting the non-political post of Secretary to the Office of Works, "motives are very complex things, and mine are no exception." Few of his "motives" found expression in what

he wrote. He remained a privileged observer, and the large body of his letters and journals here printed suggest that even in his solitary musings the events of the world about him were his main concern. They are as delightful as valuable—the portraits and anecdotes and comments—and give the book permanent interest as a social document.

JOSEPHINE; WIFE OF NAPOLEON. By E. A. Rheinhardt. English version by Caroline Frederick. Hurst and Blackett. 15*s.*

This biography of Josephine is an odd mixture of seriousness and vulgarity; it allows itself the now inevitable reconstruction of thoughts and emotions for which there is no evidence, but it also sifts a great quantity of material and makes an attempt to elicit psychological truth from a confusion of facts. Its view of the Empress is at the start sympathetic; it shows her first husband, Beauharnais, as a hypocrite and a pedantic prig whose behaviour would have turned any woman of spirit into an adventuress. But, the adventuress once created, the biographer loses his sympathy for her; not without vindictiveness he sees the rôles of Napoleon and his wife reversed, and the woman who had once taken her lover's passionate letters for granted herself writing in abject entreaty. A new and essentially modern picture of Josephine as a greedy sensual egoist; interesting in spite of its lapses into popular story-making; innocent of bibliography and references.

I WAS A TRAMP. By John Brown. Selwyn and Blount. 9*s.*

Mr. John Brown is the man who argued Socialism with Lord Nuffield at the factory gates and so got a free trip to Russia. He has been unemployed, he has been a sailor, a bricklayer's assistant, an Oxford undergraduate. He has also fought in a boxing booth: and most of his writing is very good boxing. He is always watching for the other fellow to drop his hand: then he darts in, and teaches him a lesson without killing him quite.

I, JAMES WHITTAKER. By James Whittaker. Rich and Cowan. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Whittaker was born in Edinburgh slums and spent his childhood on the west coast of Scotland. He has a keen eye for natural beauties and a deep and violent loathing for the filth, the ill-treatment and the lack of opportunity that keep his class down. Every word has been penned after a long day's work in the factory. The author writes as a tired-out working man, and so his autobiography has an ethos that is true and rare.

## LITERARY

A SURVEY OF ANGLO-INDIAN FICTION. By Bhupal Singh, M.A. Humphrey Milford. 12*s.* 6*d.*

Nearly one thousand novels are dealt with in this book, and in an admirably well-ordered manner. The charm of the exotic plays a great part in nearly the whole body of fiction written by the English about India. An Indian critic has the advantage of being able to discount the exotic and appraise the quality of a study exactly. The interest—and it is often a great interest—is largely sociological. Professor Singh appreciates this, but when a literary judgment is called for he is equally apt. His analysis of the various types of fiction is deliciously and justly witty, and he has a talent for summing up vague classes in a tidy phrase.

CHARLES LAMB. A Study. By J. Lewis May. Geoffrey Bles. 10*s.* 6*d.*

Nobody could be expected to throw a new light on Lamb. Mr. Lewis May is content to justify himself as an orthodox Elian and to communicate the necessary, the true glow of faith. For the benefit of the general reader he tells once more the tragic story of Lamb's life. His own transcendental tendencies enable him, indirectly, to suggest the quiddity, the essential secret of the essayist's world and bring it within grasping distance.

MAMMONART. By Upton Sinclair. Werner Laurie. 7*s.* 6*d.*

*Mammonart* is Mr. Sinclair's *tu quoque* to those critics who from the beginning of his career have been dismissing or belittling his novels as "propaganda." All art, he asserts, is propaganda, at least in the sense that every art-work is a statement of a point of view which the artist desires his audience to acknowledge as true (that is, accept). More, he declares much of the world's art to be propaganda on behalf of the ruling classes, and in a vigorous but of necessity summary survey of some hundred of the great names

of literature (and a very few composers and painters) he differentiates between the rebels and those who served their masters. He is frequently fatuous but never dull, and there is a substratum of insufficiently realized truth which deserves patient critical attention.

WOMEN NOVELISTS FROM FANNY BURNEY TO GEORGE ELIOT. By MURIEL MASEFIELD. University Extension Library. Nicholson and Watson. 4*s.* 6*d.*

Susan Ferrier, whose shrewd pictures of the last lairds in a prosaic age were eclipsed by Scott's romantic evocations of the past, is among the forgotten novelists whom Mrs. Masefield recalls for us. Both in its details and main purpose, this is an excellent manual. Mrs. Masefield traces the democratic progress of the novel-of-manners from eighteenth-century ballrooms to the upper middle-class homes of Charlotte Yonge and the humble folk of George Eliot.

THE ART OF THE NOVEL. By Professor PELHAM EDGAR. Macmillan. 10*s.*

A rather onesided discussion, generally sound and sometimes shrewd. The manner of writing, however, is dull, the use of terms in the making of definitions is arbitrary, and there are some appalling ineptitudes of phrase.

## POETRY

POEMS. By STEPHEN SPENDER. *Second Edition.* Faber and Faber. 5*s.*

Two poems have been cancelled from the original edition. For the omission of *My parents quarrel in the neighbour room* the reasons are perhaps only temporary. We are told, however, that the writer regards the whole book as representing a stage through which he has now passed ; and the nine new poems (which are here reprinted from *New Country*, *New Verse*, and the *Spectator*), belong to the same past. A number of small verbal changes indicate great care in correction ; among the most interesting is the substitution of the particular " *German* streams " (on p. 24) for the simple " *lovely* streams " (in *New Country*, p. 242).

## MISCELLANEOUS

A PUBLISHER SPEAKING. By GEOFFREY FABER. Faber and Faber. 3*s.* 6*d.*

These occasional papers on bookselling and publishing bring urgently forward a number of suggestions which demand immediate consideration by the trade and make a number of appeals to the general public. Mr. Faber's most important point is the need for " planned " publishing by a Central Association whose prime purpose must be to " limit the present preposterous overproduction of books." On advertising he says, " Authors tend to take their books to publishers who advertise them extensively " ; and on reviewing, " The loss of anonymity has spelled a certain loss of authority." A final note on the censorship condemns it as impracticable.

BURGUNDY. By STEPHEN GWYNN. Constable. 5*s.*

The latest addition to Messrs. Constable's Wine Library is the volume on Burgundy. Mr. Stephen Gwynn was well chosen as author, for, as traveller and fisherman, he is already an authority on that much blessed province and he can write about wine with enthusiasm and yet avoid cloying extravagances of imagery The manual is entertaining and informed by actual experience, but practical and detailed. Having mastered it the reader might hold his own on Burgundy with the haughtiest of wine waiters.

HAVING CROSSED THE CHANNEL. By X. MARCEL BOULESTIN. Heinemann. 6*s.*

All worthy travellers will enjoy M. Boulestin's new book. It is not only a gourmet's guide of an important order but also a distillation of the finer essences of holiday pleasures in regions " over which the Roman wind has blown " and left the charm of mingled simplicity and culture. He can see a landscape not only as a painter might, but also with the sentiment born of a knowledge of how human life is lived there. Freshly, as one who had never seen one before, he can describe the half-stripped cork trees down in the Landes as " like the legs of a Siamese cat." He does not travel to eat but rather eats and drinks as well as possible to get the utmost enchantment from travel, and he does not travel on special terms as a well-known writer on food and wine, so his information is dependable for the many who will try to follow in his tracks. An especially useful chapter gives detailed news of small, inexpensive, yet good restaurants in Paris. M. Baboureur's drawings have just the right air of gaiety and spirit of place.

# FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Autobiography and biography figure prominently in the autumn publishing lists; with Mr. H. G. Wells' characteristically candid *Autobiography* (Vol. I, Gollancz) to give distinction to the opening days of October.

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's new volume of essays, *Experience*, issued at the same time by Putnams, is linked by an autobiographical thread to the earlier volumes, and so may be included under this heading.

The *Autobiography* of John Cowper Powys who from his fastness in Dorset affirms that he has become "as grave and solemn as certain sorts of animals and birds," is to be published by The Bodley Head on October 8th.

Mr. Augustus John has written a foreword to Mr. Cecil Gray's biographical work on Peter Warlock, announced for this month by Jonathan Cape. Appreciations of the composer, whose sudden and tragic death was so great a loss to music, have also been contributed by Sir Richard Terry and Mr. Robert Nichols. Wishart will issue a new life of Dickens, by Mr. Hugh Kingsmill, entitled *The Sentimental Journey*, which is likely to produce some controversial repercussions.

Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Elizabethan Essays* (Faber and Faber), Mr. Wyndham Lewis's *Men Without Art* (Cassells), a volume of critical essays on Mr. Eliot, Mr. Ernest Hemingway and other contemporaries, and Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Avowals and Denials* (Methuen), will all enliven, in their several ways, the autumn publishing season. The Cambridge University Press announce, also for this month, a new volume of critical essays by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch: *The Poet as Citizen; and Other Papers.*

Among historical works, the appearance of Mr. Winston Churchill's *Marlborough* is one of the chief events of the month. His second volume, covering the years 1702–1705 will be issued by Harrap on October 22nd.

Mr. James Laver's new book, *Background for Venus*, is announced for the end of October by Heinemann.

Two October books of travel and adventure deal with attempts to conquer Everest. Mr. Hugh Ruttledge's magnificently illustrated account of the 1933 expedition (Hodder and Stoughton) will be followed later in the month by *Himalayan Wanderer* (MacLehose and Co.), by Brigadier-General Bruce, who led the Everest expeditions of 1922–24.

M. Edouard Herriot's *Russian Journey*, in which the French ex-Premier gives an account of his visit to Russia in the July of last year, is to be issued by Gollancz on October 22nd.

M. Herriot's fellow-countryman, M. André Maurois, has assembled a number of studies of Englishwomen, which Cassells will issue under the title of *Ricochet.*

John Murray is the publisher of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*, by Dr. Starkie, the Dublin professor, who has a rare experience and knowledge of gipsy life.

The Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, Mr. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, who served with the 1/4 Berkshires during the war, and later as Intelligence Officer at the War Office, has written a short history of the war, illustrated by maps and battle plans, which the Oxford University Press will publish.

*Calling All Countries; a Post-War Credo*, by Mr. Geoffrey West (Routledge), is a survey of the last sixteen years, in which the writer attempts to distinguish between the elements of the post-war world which belong to the future, and those which belong to a vanishing past.

Routledge will also publish a new study of Coleridge by Mr. I. A. Richards, *On Imagination: Coleridge's Critical Theory*, in which Mr. Richards deals with Coleridge's thought on the nature and power of words.

Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Freedom and Organization* will be published by Allen and Unwin on October 9th.

In connection with the approaching centenary of John Richard Green, his nephew, Mr. J. R. Green, is engaged upon a biography of the historian. He would be glad if anyone able to supply letters or recollections would communicate with him at 58, St. Albans Avenue, Bournemouth.

# CORRESPONDENCE

## AFTER SHELLEY

(*To the Editor of* THE LONDON MERCURY.)

SIR,—In his kind review of *After Shelley* Mr. Osbert Burdett seems rather distressed by the obscurity in which I have left some parts of the story of Jane Williams and T. J. Hogg. The story is, in fact, obscure. I may as well say, if it was not said clearly enough in the Introduction, that Jane was never married to Williams nor to Hogg. She could not marry Williams because she had a legal husband living. He was still living in 1827 when she would doubtless have married Hogg, other things being equal. When she had become the mother of Hogg's daughter Prudentia, possibly her husband was still living somewhere, but it is clear that she was known commonly as Mrs. Hogg, and a marriage on the death of the obscure Johnson would only have drawn attention to Prudentia's illegitimacy. Since she is mentioned in Hogg's will as the mother of Prudentia and not as the wife of Hogg, I did not think it necessary to harp upon an expression which in such a document could have only one meaning.

May I add that I shall be very grateful for any information relating to Hogg, and particularly to Jane Williams, or to Henry Cleveland, Jane's nephew. I should especially value any further light on the relations between Jane and Mary Shelley.

Yours faithfully,

SYLVA NORMAN

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## THE UNKNOWN PACIFIC

(*To the Editor of* THE LONDON MERCURY.)

SIR,—In your October number last year you were large-hearted enough to publish my appeal for sympathy, if not assistance, in my work of drawing attention to that, at present, UNTOUCHED FIELD : the archæology of the Pacific. BUT (there's always a " but " !) the Printer's Devil with his usual fondness for a " lark " (cost what it may !) spelt my name wrongly. My name, correctly marked, would find me here if only " *VOGAN. Pymble. N.S. Wales. Australia* " was readably put on an envelope.

I have just returned from my most important discovery in the Pacific ; and his Excellency Sir Murchison Fletcher, a great archæologist of wide experience, told me, ere I left Fiji, that it was by far the most interesting find yet made—eclipsing even that of Easter Island in some respects ! *But no interest is taken in it in Australia, or England !* When very ill (thinking I might be dying) I offered the CASTS of my discovery of 2,000-year-old Chinese script to our Sydney University ; and their lorry met the steamer and put these delicate objects in the Nicholson Museum—as I had hoped, permanently ! *But our University is really a great TECHNICAL COLLEGE to-day ;* and no interest is taken in anything of merely intellectual value. I will have to find another home for my casts ; and as I have had a letter from that greatest of all British antiquarians, *Professor Haddon*, suggesting Cambridge University, I probably will take them THERE. I have traced Chinese, Indian, and Burmese " art-motives," cryptoglyphs, and language from HERE (Sydney) and N. Zealand, New Caledonia and Fiji to Asia ; and at least *THREE civilized races* have occupied the now " savage " islands at various times. Why they disappeared ? whether our Race will follow suit ? and a hundred other questions, remain unanswered.

I will readily *give my collections*, hundreds of photos and note-books and sketches, to any reliable person, or institution, that will carry on my thankless work—which SOME DAY will be recognized as of the greatest importance ! *Hundreds of islands remain still virgin* to the white-man's adventuring ; and I may safely say that I have hardly ever visited a " new" island, without discovering archæological, botanical, and biological objects which are quite unknown until my advent.

*Who will write the history of the Burmese, Chinese, and Arabs* who carried on a commerce across the Pacific hundreds, or thousands of years before our Race had heard of Christianity?

ARTHUR J. VOGAN

# ART—THE SITUATION TO-DAY

IN the dead season, before the beginning of a new series of exhibitions, it might be useful to attempt a very summary review of the contemporary situation. Certain tendencies which have been obscured for a number of years are now becoming clear : an alignment of forces is taking place, and what we have been accustomed to call the modern movement is evidently splitting up into two distinct and irreconcilable groups. The line of division is not the old one of modernist and reactionary : it may be the equally old one of classical and romantic.

The Braque exhibition held in July at Messrs. Reid and Lefévre's gallery was a significant occasion. Still more significant is Carl Einstein's book on Braque which Messrs. Zwemmer have recently published. The exhibition was significant because it revealed in the public a general lack of comprehension of the painter's purpose—an ignorance of the right approach to his work. Exponents of the modern movement, who had perhaps never seen so many of Braque's paintings before, found themselves a little disillusioned. Some of the paintings seemed so loosely thrown together, so lacking in structure ; and they did not seem to have compensating virtues of handling or texture. Themes were carelessly repeated and enlarged, and there was a general lack of development. In despair the critics fell back on the artist's sense of colour, and talked about " decorative " values, but they could not disguise a general sense of disappointment.

Now, only a few weeks afterwards, there appears a large book which proclaims Braque the most representative painter of the age. It is true that Mr. Einstein does not indulge in any comparative judgments ; but the fact that Braque serves him as the hero of the most penetrating and philosophical examination of the modern movement ever attempted speaks for itself. I am not reviewing Mr. Einstein's book, but I must take this opportunity of drawing attention to its importance. It is a brilliant essay in sociological criticism, seeking an explanation and defence of the modern movement on a basis much wider than that of pure æsthetics or taste. Braque, Mr. Einstein declares, does not interest him merely as a painter. Paintings in general do not interest him except in so far as they are " psychic evidence "—" signes d'événements psychiques amples." Cubism, for example, is important as a manifestation of a changed mentality —as evidence of the break-up of the bourgeois mentality of the nineteenth century, as a destructive force preparing the way for the proletarian art of the twentieth century.

Braque, as Mr. Einstein points out, has gone beyond the " tectonic " cubism of his first phase, towards a purely intuitive mode of expression—the expression of a " reality " more real than the ideal realities of impressionism, post-impressionism, etc. The artist, freed from every inherited obligation, creates objects completely *new*, completely detached from the social prejudices of the bourgeoisie. How such irrational art is to be linked up with " la nouvelle utopie collective "—with Marxian communism, that is to say—is not quite clear. But we should note that the art of Braque, as interpreted by Mr. Einstein, has an obvious affinity with another and a younger school which openly professes a sympathy with Communism—the Surréaliste group. Another recent publication (*Petite Anthologie Poétique du Surréalisme :* Paris, Editions Jeanne Bucher) provides us with an excellent survey of this active group, and the Introduction to the book written by Georges Hugnet is the clearest exposition of the

surréaliste point of view that is available anywhere. It is a perfectly lucid and rational defence of irrationalism in art and literature.

The irrational movement in modern art is not, however, the only movement in existence, though its scandal is sure to earn it most attention from the public. Certain contemporary painters and sculptors have been compelled by these very developments to affirm their belief in the structural, the tectonic and therefore rational elements in art. They remain equally " abstract "—in fact, much more properly abstract than the surréalistes, if by abstract we mean non-figurative, non-representational. The Paris group (actually international in its constituents), which used to include many degrees of abstraction within its wide membership, is undergoing a process of scission, and a new group may be formed, which will include pure abstractionists only—painters such as Mondrian, Hélion, Tauber-Arp, Erni and Ben Nicholson, sculptors such as Arp and Barbara Hepworth. These artists are to be dissociated entirely from the surréaliste tendency, though the line of demarcation may be more difficult to draw than they anticipate. But the broad distinction between the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious, the tectonic and what Mr. Einstein would like to call the magical, does exist, and is likely to become clearer from now onwards. Personally I think that the tectonic group, because it has certain affinities with modern architecture, and with modern developments in industrial art, is destined to have a more vital relationship with " la nouvelle utopie collective." But perhaps the truth is that both tendencies must be accommodated within the civilization of the future ; for romanticism and classicism, as I have attempted to show in other connections, are to be regarded as two inevitable or inescapable aspects of human nature, and the greatest art is precisely that which reconciles these tendencies in a complex unity.

HERBERT READ

# THE THEATRE

EDEN END. By J. B. Priestley. Duchess Theatre.
THE SHINING HOUR. By Keith Winter. St. James' Theatre.
A MAN'S HOUSE. By John Drinkwater. New Theatre.

THE notices of Mr. Priestley's new play which I have happened to see have not erred on the side of enthusiasm. Some of them have even given the impression that the writing is as humdrum as the characters which are represented. One may be eager to contest this opinion without feeling any temptation to pronounce *Eden End* a masterpiece. It is an ultra-modern play in the sense that it attempts to detect drama in people whose lives are given no obvious theatrical pattern. All the author's selection, arrangement and concentration are designed to suggest that the doctor's household in a remote Yorkshire town is composed of ordinary people living ordinary lives which have only to be seen from the right angle to become dramatic. "Story! God bless you! I have none to tell you, sir," he seems to say. "But here are two sisters, Stella a prodigal who has returned home a dismal failure as an actress hoping to find sanctuary from her muddled life and Lilian who has stayed dully at home while the bright, emotional, attractive member of the family sought adventure. Stella seems likely to spoil Lilian's chance of marriage. There are quarrels. Lilian is quietly implacable. Stella is driven back to the dreary round of theatrical agents, dingy lodgings and precarious engagements, making peace with her worthless actor-husband. Her departure is outwardly calm, outwardly easy. But is there not pathos, is there not drama in it? She has been cheated of peace and happiness in quiet *Eden End* and her sister has gained nothing by her victory. Anyway, that is how it happened."

Not so long ago Mr. Priestley would have been told that it was his business as a dramatist to see that it happened differently. Theatregoers who remember the 'nineties will perhaps recall how vigorous then was the superstition that drama must not imitate the formlessness of life—a superstition deriving of course from the time when it was not the main object of drama to imitate anything at all. Burke in his *Hints for an Essay on the Drama* had no doubts. "We may as well urge that stones, sand, clay and metals lie in a certain manner in the earth, as a reason for building with these materials and in that manner, as for writing according to the accidental disposition of character in nature." But the drama of Burke's day was an art rather of presentation than of representation, and the parallel with architecture was apter then than now, when drama, unlike architecture, is an imitative art. Mr. Priestley is not a pioneer in ultra-realism. What he brings to the established form is a compassionate understanding of the reactions of prosaic people to the ordinary perplexities of life and an uncommon instinct for the touch of quality latent in them.

There are patches of dead dialogue in *Eden End*, though these are rare and, what is almost as bad, there are occasional lapses from strict realism, but the play as a whole is most carefully and skilfully fitted together. Take for instance the character of the hard-working general practitioner in whose house the action passes. The conflict of his two daughters, which is the essence of the play, never comes to his knowledge, but his importance to the play is threefold. Neither of his daughters wishes to hurt his feelings and their regard for him largely determines the course of their struggle.

There is poignant irony in his unquestioning belief, which is never disturbed, that the girl who ran away to be an actress is now successful and happy. And it is the simple integrity of this old Yorkshireman which establishes the atmosphere of the home and explains the longing of the prodigal to return to its security. The workmanship is good, the characterization is magnificent, and, story or no story, the play is of absorbing interest. The theme is a gloomy one, but Mr. Priestley is not one of those writers who have brooded over all that they have seen of undeserved, unchecked and uncompensated suffering till their minds have been tinged with bitterness. As he sees them, most people are glad to be alive ; they suffer, but they make their own compensations ; and in this play he comes nearer than ever before to giving full rein to his perceptions. It is beautifully acted. Miss Alison Leggatt conveys the fine emotional shades of the sister who, seeing the fruits of her sacrifice to domestic duty about to be snatched away, defends them with weapons of which she is secretly ashamed. Miss Beatrix Lehmann, if inclined to make too little of the third-rate actress's love of the flamboyant, discerns the consistency underlying her easy emotionalism and her waves of genuine feeling. Mr. Edwin Irwin, as the benign doctor, gives the best study of north country character that I have ever seen on the stage, and Mr. Ralph Richardson makes the shiftless actor husband likeable in his transparent pretentiousness and wholly delightful in his tippling scene. Miss Irene Hentschel, the producer, has been very skilful in carrying out the author's intentions.

At the other end of the town and at the other end of the theatrical pole is *The Shining Hour*. Here is Mr. Keith Winter practising a glamorous falsification of life and contriving by clever dialogue, an admirably acute sense of the stage and a wise choice of actors to excite our interest in a story and in characters which are incredible. There is not a great deal to be said about it. All through the piece one has the comfortable conviction that Mr. Winter will keep up the suspense, and one can honestly admire the skill with which theatrical individualities are built in small-talk. Mr. Raymond Massey captures our sympathy on behalf of a sporting farmer who, never having loved his wife, cannot be blamed for finding in the lady charmingly presented by Miss Gladys Cooper his destined soul-mate. There are several scenes which few dramatists would have disdained to write, but they do not include that in which the unhappy pair are separated for ever by the altruistic suicide of the young wife who loves but knows that she has never been loved. There is emotional delicacy, and even depth in Miss Adrianne Allen's interpretation of this part and it is bad luck that the part is only half a one.

Mr. Drinkwater, who shows as much courage as Mr. Priestley and a great deal more than Mr. Winter, has not their good fortune. He has tried to study quietly and realistically the effect upon a middle-class Jewish family of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, showing how to some the event was an inconsiderable incident in the life of the city, to some the beginning of a new life, to one a sudden menace to the prosperity of business and to another a sad disruption of family ties, *A Man's House* has simplicity, directness and dignity ; but the dramatist who writes a play about the Founder of Christianity cannot help raising expectations which nothing less than authentic inspiration will satisfy. It is hazardous ground on which most modern dramatists have fared ill. Anything in the nature of a doctrinal challenge is more likely to exasperate or to bore than to excite controversial interest. The technical problem is immensely complicated by the law which will not allow Jesus to be represented on the stage. The history which it sought to re-shape is familiar to all and sacred to millions. No one has come nearer to success than George Moore, but he wrote for the private stage and abandoning orthodox teaching on the Crucifixion, translated God into man

and boldly distorted the New Testament. If his play failed it was only because the texture of his narrative had been fashioned for another medium and he would not break it for the sake of giving direct expression to that conflict of wills which was implicit when the Jesus who had not died on the Cross refused to confute an ardent Paul preaching the Resurrection. Brunetière's famous definition of drama as the spectacle of the struggle of will against obstacles covers most cases but not, perhaps, that of Moore.

Several interesting attempts have been made in recent years to overcome the difficulties of the public stage. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie in *Follow Me* sought to make the point that if Christ came to the modern world, history would repeat itself and the disciples would be hunted from their hiding-places in the seedy hotels of London. The play had one or two well-imagined scenes, but it seemed in the end that it had been scarcely worth while to strip history of its beauty for the sake of a dubious parallel. Mr. Campbell Dixon and Mr. Dermot Morrah, gave their *Cæsar's Friend* distinction by drawing a skilful sketch of a Pilate stirred to curiosity by the tenets of a new doctrine whose grace he dimly apprehended, but the play bore the marks of a divided authorship. Neither of these plays had the dramatic power and beauty of Maeterlinck's *Mary Magdalene*. Maeterlinck was also writing for the public stage, but his imagination, fired by the theme of the regeneration of a woman defiled, swept his play across difficulties which have obstructed Mr. Drinkwater. A conflict between reason and wisdom is implicit in *A Man's House*, but it is weakened by the wide dispersion of interest which the author allows himself. Nor can it be said that any incident or any character seems to spring from a mind deeply moved, and, for that reason more than for any other, the play fails to maintain the significance of fictitious family affairs against its overwhelming historical background. It achieves a moment of beauty in the miraculous healing of an embittered blind woman and her sudden vision of a world of new spiritual values, but the last act is largely made up of protracted leave-takings most of which we would gladly take for granted. The acting is unequal. Miss Joyce Bland, as blind Esther, gives a performance distinguished by its delicate certainty of touch ; Mr. Reginald Tate endows the crudely ambitious son with the right kind of vitality ; there are minor sketches of considerable merit by Mr. Stanley Lathbury and Mr. Laidman Browne ; but Mr. Basil Radford, so good an actor when properly cast, plays an important part without the necessary conviction and disturbs the balance of the performance.

A. V. COOKMAN

# FILMS

CLEOPATRA. Paramount.
THE HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD. Twentieth Century.
THE AFFAIRS OF CELLINI. Twentieth Century.
THE PRIVATE LIFE OF DON JUAN. London Films.
EVENSONG. Gaumont-British.

THE pageant of screen history—or whatever you prefer to call it—continues When Mr. Alexander Korda first tried to find backers for *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, he was told in Wardour Street that costume films were dead and buried. Now—and largely as a result of his success—they have experienced a wild and wonderful resurrection, with the rival shades of Dumas and Lytton Strachey, one might say, hovering round the microphone in a fabulous palace setting of the later stucco period.

Last month Queens were in the ascendant—two Catherines of Russia, followed in the general release programme by Christina of Sweden and Nadina of Ruritania. This month, including the pre-releases with the general releases, we have to welcome yet another queen—Cleopatra of Egypt—escorted by an amorous Italian goldsmith, a legendary Spanish lover, and a masterful Jewish banker.

Taken together, these films illustrate very clearly two different ways of treating history. One way—here speaks the voice of Dumas—is the use of historical events as a means of escape into an imaginary world of rhetoric and romance, inviting the spectator to murmur : " Ah—how wonderful it must have been to live like that !" The other way—here the shade of Strachey speaks—aims at a precisely contrary effect : the " debunking " of history from a knowing standpoint of modern disillusion. The spectator is asked to smile complacently and to think : " After all, those great historical characters were just like anyone else."

The Dumas method is revealed at its most extravagant pitch in *Cleopatra* and more subtly in *The House of Rothschild*, due for general release on October 22nd. The Strachey method is used crudely in *The Affairs of Cellini*, gracefully in *The Private Life of Don Juan*. The unfortunate part is that each method has a certain virtue denied to the other, and no one seems to be able to combine the two.

*Cleopatra* is the latest " epic " of Mr. Cecil B. de Mille. A severe critic will certainly be horrified by this orgy of galloping chariots and burning galleys ; by the spectacular vulgarity of these Roman triumphs and Egyptian entertainments ; by this muscular Antony who habitually appears holding in leash two enormous boarhounds ; by this Cleopatra (Claudette Colbert) whose American accent emphasizes her life-like portrait of a Hollywood courtesan. And yet there is something engaging in the very extravagance of Mr. de Mille's naïve imagination. He is like a schoolboy in love with his marvellous new Meccano outfit, and sure that everyone else will be equally dazzled. It would be easier to smile than to criticize—if one did not remember that thousands of film-goers will take this rhetorical charade as a serious rendering of ancient history.

However, Mr. de Mille at least knows how to tell a story, and the narrative methods of *The House of Rothschild*, featuring Mr. George Arliss, are founded on an equally shrewd knowledge of popular taste, though in outward style this picture is much more

sober and realistic. We are shown the Rothschild family as the saviours of Europe during the Napoleonic wars; Nathan Rothschild, by lending money to the British Government, helps Wellington to win at Waterloo. The dialogue is conventionally melodramatic—"You have won, Jew, but remember, victory may be bought too dearly"—and history is considerably modified in order to give Mr. Arliss a nobly heroic part; but the action moves swiftly through a series of neatly-woven dramatic situations, and there is real warmth of feeling in the film's championship of Jews against envious persecution.

It is exactly these qualities—narrative vigour and warmth of feeling—which are lacking from *The Affairs of Cellini* and *The Private Life of Don Juan*. The Cellini picture can be briefly dismissed, for, in spite of amusing touches, its characters—fussy husband, bored wife, and dashing lover—are little more than familiar triangle-comedy types in fancy dress. *Don Juan* is another matter, for here Mr. Korda has set out to produce a picture which shall equal *Henry VIII* in the boldness of its treatment and the glitter of its style; and in incidental details he has often succeeded. The dialogue, by Frederick Lonsdale and Lajos Biro, is unusually neat and witty; the Spanish courtyards and landscapes are finely photographed; Oliver Messel's costumes have an air of distinguished elegance; and the cast is exceptionally rich in talent. Also, the underlying idea—of an ageing Don Juan who learns that his conquests have come to depend on his reputation, not on his personal prowess—is ingenious, and well suited to Mr. Korda's ironic manner.

But Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, though at times he shows that his acting powers are more varied than many people may have thought, is never able to suggest Don Juan's dazzling past, and the story wanders at a far too leisurely speed among repetitive incidents devoid of dramatic climax. In fact, this is a film which does everything except grip its audience with a feeling of narrative excitement; and films are like bicycles—unless they move they are bound to fall flat.

This does not mean that films need complicated plots full of rushing adventure and constant changes of scene. A fairly simple theme is all that can be safely handled in the running time of an ordinary picture; but every image should seem to flow into the next with a feeling of dramatic purpose. There must be no idle, static scenes, however neatly adorned with clever dialogue. Unfortunately, film producers have always been too inclined to separate cleverness from action. On the one hand are thick-headed cowboys galloping through glorious scenery; on the other, witty intellectuals chatting about divorce in dull drawing-rooms. In France intellect is treated more naturally, not as a rare luxury; and it is for this reason that René Clair has been able to use the traditional slapstick methods of screen farce as a basis for satisfying comedies.

Finally, *Evensong* shows that in Mr. Victor Saville we have at least one British director who knows how to put narrative vitality into emotional screen drama. His story, freely adapted from the novel by Beverley Nichols, follows the career of a prima donna through world-wide success to the painful stage of elderly decline. It is all quite ordinary in conception, and the ending is too arbitrary; but the action is carried forward irresistibly on a flowing current of song, and I cannot remember any film in which music has been woven so naturally into the texture of the plot. Miss Evelyn Laye, as the prima donna, is required to face the musical competition of Madame Conchita Supervia, who is also in the cast, and the dramatic competition of that excellent German actor, Fritz Kortner, who has the part of her manager. Also she allows herself, towards the end, to look old and haggard, in horn-rimmed spectacles. She comes through it all with courage and success.

MARTIN HERNE

# BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

## THE ASHENDENE "DAPHNIS AND CHLOE"

A FEW days ago, amongst other notable "new accessions" exhibited in the Picture Gallery at the Bodleian Library, I came upon the lovely *Daphnis and Chloe*,* printed not long since at the Ashendene Press. It contains the French text of Amyot's translation—Amyot, it will be remembered, was the author of the French translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, from which North made his English rendering—and is illustrated with wood-engravings by Gwendolen Raverat. Nearly forty years have passed since Mr. Hornby set up his famous Press, which alone of modern presses has in all its work achieved and maintained an excellence comparable with that of the Kelmscott and Doves. We have been told by Mr. Hornby himself that before long he will give up printing books at the snug little printing office which he built for it in the rear of his house at Chelsea. The *Daphnis* shows that the impending end is due to no failure of skill or vitality in the hand and eye which direct it. We printers are too apt to jog along in ruts which our predecessors have made for us, or, at best, which we have made for ourselves. But there is no sign of staleness in the workmanship of the *Daphnis*. Rather, it is the freshest and gayest of all the books which Mr. Hornby has produced. It is a quarto, printed on Batchelor's Hammer and Anvil paper in the roman letter with a strong gothic affinity which was copied for the Ashendene Press from the rare German font used by F. Holle of Ulm about 1482 for his Ptolemy, and not again till Mr. Hornby printed his folio Spenser a few years ago. It has a much lighter face than the Subiaco type in which most of Mr. Hornby's books were printed from 1902 onwards, including the great folio Dante of 1909. But the excellence of the *Daphnis* owes less to the type than to the skill and good taste and discretion with which Mr. Hornby has set and made up his pages. They are printed in red, blue and black; and initial letters, pen-drawn in blue outline, as well as blue paragraph marks, have been added by the hands of calligraphers working under Mr. Graily Hewitt. Then there are the engravings of Mrs. Raverat, who alone perhaps of modern wood-engravers could picture this pastoral idyll with such delicacy of conception and such grace of touch. Some of them are full-page; others are cut into the text, and they all blend with it in complete agreement. Mr. Hornby's treatment of the headings and headlines, widely letter-spaced to the measure of the page, help to give the book its air of lightsomeness. That is a quality which is too often wanting from the work of those who would follow too slavishly the Kelmscott manner.

## RUDOLF KOCH'S WALLAU TYPE

MEMBERS of the Gutenberg Society of Mainz are already in happy possession of their annual for 1934—the ninth issue of the *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*.† It is printed in the Wallau-Schrift, designed by the late Rudolf Koch, and cut with his own hand. In previous numbers of THE LONDON MERCURY I have drawn attention

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* *Les Amours pastorales de Daphnis et Chloe.* Traduction de Messire J. Amyot, éditée et corrigée par P.-L. Courier. Ce livre fut imprimé par C. H. St. John Hornby sur sa presse à bras à Shelley House, Chelsea. 310 exemplaires, dont 20 sur parchemin.

† Herausgeben von A. Ruppel, Verlag der Gutenberg-Gesellschaft in Mainz.

to the admirable qualities of the letter. By the courtesy of Klingspor Brothers, the typefounders, of Offenbach, I am able to show a specimen of it—in a much larger size than the 12-point used for the *Jahrbuch*—and with it some other specimens of types designed by Koch. There are two series of upper-case letters cut for the type—one of gothic character, which in the *Jahrbuch* is used for the articles in the German language ; the other more of a roman design, reserved in the *Jahrbuch* for the articles in foreign languages.

Wallau-Series

**He jests at scars, that never felt a wound**

**TODA CLASE DE IMPRESOS PARA EL**

Oxford Series Black

**There is a sorcery in well-loved words: but music still.**

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THE WORK OF OUR GREAT WRITERS

## EARLY PAPER-MAKING IN GERMANY

THE first two articles in the *Jahrbuch* are important contributions to the history of paper-making in Germany. Herr von Schulte treats chiefly of the paper-mills which were at work in that country during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He acknowledges that the study of the papers made before that period is of much greater interest ; for the earlier papers were of a much better quality and much purer in colour than the later, and the impressions of the water-marks are therefore much clearer. But Bricquet has dealt with the earlier period in his monumental work, *Les Filigranes*, leaving the later development of paper-making to be investigated by others. While there was a great falling-off in quality, there was a great increase in output ; for whereas no more than 218 mills are known as working before 1600, in the next two centuries the number rose to 765. Herr von Schulte estimates that the number of German water-marks, including variants of the same design, must have reached the great total of 200,000. He rightly insists in the importance of the study of water-marks as a means of fixing the approximate dates of manuscripts and printed papers.

The second article—by Herr Victor Thiel—treats of paper-making in Lower Austria from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth and later.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

## ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

AS has occasionally happened before in these notes, I propose to give all my space this month to the booksellers, to have, in fact, a perfect orgy of catalogues. Let us begin with one (number 137) from Messrs. Dobell, of 8, Bruton Street, London, W.1. As is usual in this firm's catalogues, the poets make a very strong showing. Not only great poets such as Dryden and Byron, but lesser men such as Thomas Flatman and Nahum Tate. Here are copies of Flatman's *Poems and Songs*, 8vo., 1674, and of Tate's *Poems*, 8vo, 1677. Each is a first edition, and each is priced £3 3s. Then—still keeping to the out-of-the-way seventeenth-century men—I notice a copy of Matthew Stevenson's *Poems*, 8vo, 1665, described as " an exceedingly rare book," for £7 7s. I believe (but am not quite sure) that it was in this book of Stevenson's that the only poem of his which I know was first printed—*An Elegy upon Old Freeman, Us'd hardly by the Committee, for lying in the Cathedral, and in Church Porches, praying the Common-prayer by heart, etc.* The late Everard Meynell printed a small edition (four leaves) of this poem in 1916, and was kind enough to give me a copy, which I treasure greatly. The poem is full of quaint and charming touches, and had it only been a little more skilfully (or more carefully) written would have been a small masterpiece. This is how it opens :

Here in this homely Cabinet,
Resteth a poor old Anchoret ;
Upon the ground he laid all weathers,
Not as most Men, gooselike on feathers.
For so indeed it came to pass,
The Lord of Lords his Landlord was.

As the reader will perceive, Stevenson's technique lets him down—but the poem has an appealing touch all the same. There are several other uncommon seventeenth-century books of verse in this catalogue—and a number from the eighteenth century also. For example, the *Poems on Several Occasions*, 2 volumes, 8vo, 1729, of Joseph Mitchell. This is how he begins a *Song :—*

Leave kindred and friends, sweet lady,
  Leave kindred and friends for me,
Assur'd thy servant is steady
  To Love, to Honour and thee.
The gifts of Nature, and Fortune,
  May fly by chance, as they came !
They are grounds the Destinies sport on,
  But Virtue is ever the same.

That is a highly spirited stanza, though the last line is a little stiffly didactic. Messrs. Dobell offer a large and thick paper copy of Mitchell's *Poems* for £2 5s.

ANOTHER list fairly lately arrived is number 286, from Messrs. Pickering and Chatto, of 1, King Street, St. James', London, S.W.1. The reader may remember that last month I commented on the fantastic price paid for the manuscript of *Vice Versa*. Well, if he is not in a position to pay £520 for the manuscript, he can content himself with a copy of the first edition, 1882, of " F. Anstey's " famous novel,

which is priced a guinea in this list. Another taking item is Thomas Haynes Bayly's *Fifty Lyrical Ballads*, first edition, quarto, 1829, a presentation copy, priced £1 10s. In this book appeared *I'd be a Butterfly* and the original form of *Oh no, we never speak of Her*. An extremely uncommon eighteenth-century book of verse, Samuel Derrick's *Collection of Original Poems*, 8vo, 1755, interests me firstly because it is a large paper copy (and I had no note of the existence of such), and secondly because of its date. The only copy I had seen previously had the date altered in ink by the author (for presentation purposes) to 1766, and the original date so carefully erased as to be invisible. Messrs. Pickering's copy, therefore, tells me two new facts about the book (for which they ask £2 15s.). Derrick (look him up in Boswell, if you do not remember what Johnson said of him) was at moments quite a pretty poet, as in his imitation of Johannes Secundus :—

Tell me, lasses, have ye seen
Lately wandering o'er the green,
Beauty's son, a little boy,
Full of frolic, mirth and joy ?
If you know his shelter, say ;
He's from Venus gone astray.
Tell me, lasses, have ye seen
Such a one trip o'er the green ?

Naturally this list also contains many more important books than those so capriciously chosen for mention here.

I REVIEWED an important catalogue from Messrs. Quaritch (11, Grafton Street, London, W.1) last month, but as these notes seem to be dealing chiefly with poetry, I cannot refrain from all mention of this firm's catalogue of English Poetry (number 491). It contains more than a thousand items, many of them of great importance or rarity. Turning the pages at random I note the following :—Byron, uncut copies, in original boards, of *Don Juan*, cantos I and II, 1819, £85, and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* [1809], £50 ; Keats, *Endymion*, 1818, original boards, uncut, £250 ; *Lamia*, etc., 1820, original boards, uncut, £500, and *Poems*, 1817, £550 ; Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, first issue, £60 ; E. FitzGerald, *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1859, the original wrappers bound in, £900 ; and many other things to make the mouth water.

MR. BERTRAM ROTA, of 14, Old Burlington Street, London, W.1, continues to be faithful to Modern First Editions, to which his latest catalogue (number 34), is, like such of his former ones as I recall, given up. I perceive that one may have a good copy of a famous and once highly popular novel, Miss Beatrice Harraden's *Ships that Pass in the Night*, 1893, for no more than seven-and-sixpence. A first issue of Mr. Ralph Hodgson's *The Last Blackbird*, 1907, costs £2 ; and Flecker's *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*, 1913, " a fine copy," £2 10s. Another famous novel of the 'nineties (and later), Mr. Kipling's *The Light that Failed*, 1891, is priced £3 10s. ; and for £1 10s. you can buy Mr. Eden Phillpott's extremely amusing *The Human Boy*, 1899. How this last book used to delight me twenty-five years ago. I must re-read it. I recollect that our family copy had been so much read that it had to be rebound, and the binder, by an ingenious emendation, lettered it " The Human Body."

I. A. WILLIAMS